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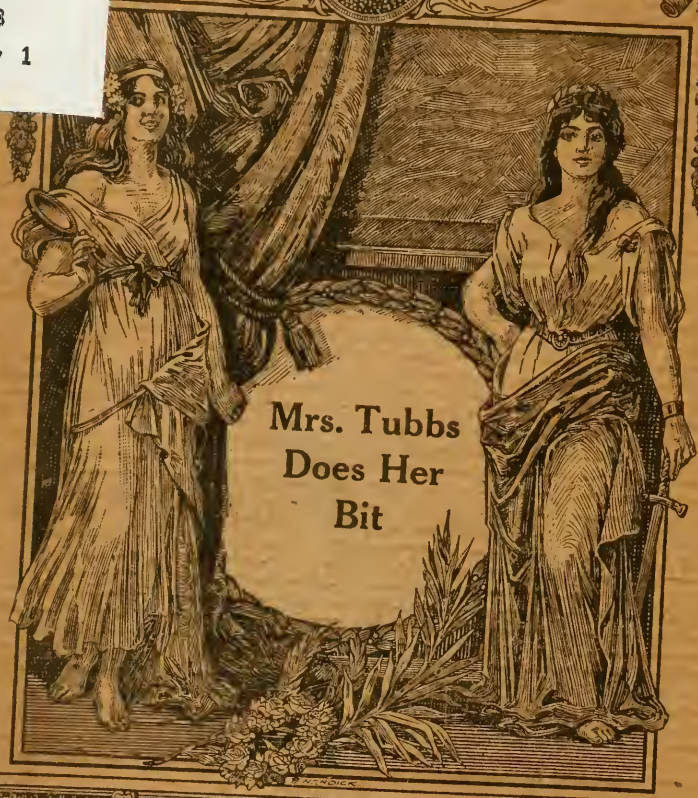

Mrs. Tubbs Does Her Bit

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When the Circus Came to Town, 3 acts, 2¼ hrs. (25c)	5	3

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY, Publishers, 154 W. Randolph St., Chicago

MRS. TUBBS DOES HER BIT

A PATRIOTIC COMEDY-DRAMA

IN THREE ACTS

BY

WALTER BEN HARE

AUTHOR OF

"Aaron Boggs, Freshman," "Abbu San of Old Japan," "And Home Came Ted," "A Bird in the Hand," "Civil Service," "A College Town," "A Country Boy Scout," "Deacon Dubbs," "The Fascinators," "Kicked Out of College," "Laughing Water," "Macbeth a la Mode," "Mrs. Tubbs of Shantytown," "An Old Fashioned Mother," "Parlor Matches," "A Poor Married Man," "Rose o' My Heart," "A Rustic Romeo," "Savageland," "Sewing for the Heathen," "A Southern Cinderella," and "The White Christmas and Other Merry Christmas Plays."

CHICAGO

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

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MRS. TUBBS DOES HER BIT

For Five Men, Five Women, Two Boys, Two Girls.

CHARACTERS.

MRS. MOLLIE TUBBS.....*A Patriotic Mother*
AUNT SEREPTY MCDOUGAL.....*A Wealthy Old Lady*
MISS CLINGIE VINE.....*A Romantic Old Maid*
MRS. ELLEN HICKEY.....*A Kind Neighbor*
ELSIE WEST.....*A Red Cross Nurse*
JAMES SCOTLAND TUBBS.....*One of Uncle Sam's Boys*
SIMON RUBBELS.....*The Grocery Man*
MAJOR JOHN PEPPER.....*The Commander of the Camp*
NELSON REDD.....*Private of the First Class*
PRIVATE TIM GRAHAM.....*One of the Boys*
QUEENIE SHEBA TUBBS.....*Aged Eleven*
SCUFFLES TUBBS.....*Aged Ten*
BILLY BLOSSOM TUBBS.....*"A Little Feller"*
PUNKY.....*The Tubbs Toddler*

TIME—*Year, Nineteen-seventeen.*

PLACE—*Shantytown, the "slum district" of a large city near a Military Camp.*

TIME OF PLAYING—*Two Hours and Fifteen Minutes.*

SYNOPSIS.

ACT I. The front room of Mrs. Tubbs' little shack in Shantytown. "America, here's my boy!"

ACT II. Same scene, six weeks later. A military wedding.

ACT III. *Scene* 1. The Army Camp at midnight. Mrs. Tubbs does her bit.

Scene 2. Same as Act I. Mrs. Tubbs, a prisoner of war.

During the second act the curtain will be dropped for a few moments to indicate the lapse of three hours.

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF MRS. TUBBS.

Joke at the man who pushes you,
Smile at the man who hurries you,
Laugh at the man who's sore at you,
It doesn't cost a cent!

A laugh can lighten the heaviest load,
A smile can shorten the longest road;
The trusting heart that smiles and sings
Soars like a bird that has found its wings.

Don't be carryin' round a chip,
Wink your eye and curve your lip,
And from life's sunshine take a sip,
It doesn't cost a cent.

MRS. TUBBS SAYS:

A song and a smile make life worth while.

Eggs has riz sump'm scand'lous. How do the hens know there's a war over in Europe?

Worry don't git you nothin'. Clingie's been worryin' fer a husband fer twenty years, and where is he? She's worried so much that she ain't nothing but skin, flesh and bones.

Some folks 'ud rather grunt than smile; I ain't never heard a hog laugh yet, but they certainly can grunt.

I know that if I had *ten* sons, I'd give each one of 'em to my country and be proud to say, "America, here's my boy!"

I ain't never received nothin' yet from my rich relations except advice and picture postcards, and I ain't goin' to ask 'em now.

I ain't much, I know that; I'm only a poor widow washwoman livin' in the slums of Shantytown, but I'm an American, and I'll stand up fer my country and my flag.

What have I got to give? This is what I've got to give

—*my boy!* And he's worth more to me than all the money in the land, but I give him gladly to his country.

In war time folks has got to make sacrifices. Rich and poor, high and low, we all got to do our bit. I'll work day and night, and God is good; I'll put my trust in Him, but my boy is going to fight for his country.

Maybe Simon Rubbels *ain't* as bad as he's painted, but there ain't no angel wings a-sproutin' out of his shoulders, and I've noticed that his breath smells a heap more like brimstone than it does like angel cake.

God bless every one of 'em, every boy who wears the khaki—on land, or tossing on the waves of the ocean, or over there in the trenches fightin' fer their country and their flag. God bless 'em and send 'em safe home.

I've made up my mind, and when Mollie Tubbs makes up her mind the hull United States army and navy to boot can't unmake it. Gimme that rifle! I'm doing my bit fer humanity and my native land.

If every black cloud had a cyclone in it, the world 'ud a been blowed to toothpicks long ago.

It's the little things in life that count, Scuffles. The little things. Why you might have a di'mond ring on your finger and a gold watch in your pocket, but if you only got one suspender button, and that busts, then where are you?

See that flag, James? That there little star stands fer Missouri, and that's your star, 'cause you're a part of Missouri, so it's *your* flag and your country! Her welfare is your welfare, her fight is your fight, and her honor is your honor!

Hand to hand, foot to foot, shoulder to shoulder they march, the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the college man and the day laborer, the millionaire and the tramp, the white and the black, with one idea in their minds, one purpose in their hearts, one voice in their ears, a voice that says, "Carry on, and on, and on, forward for God and home and the star-spangled banner!"

And quit lookin' like a undertaker!

THE STORY OF THE PLAY.

Mrs. Tubbs is a smiling lady of unconquerable optimism who "never h'ists her umbrella until it begins to rain." She is a widow living with her five children in Shantytown and manages to eke out a precarious living by taking in washing, and assisted by the earnings of her son James has kept her little flock together. But the boys are enlisting for the great war and James' heart is filled with a longing to do his bit for his country and enlist under the old flag.

He fears, however, that his mother cannot support herself and the four younger children without his assistance, but just when the clouds seem the darkest the silver lining appears in the guise of Aunt Serepty McDougal, a wealthy relative, who agrees to take care of the family when James does his bit at the front.

Simon Rubbels, the rich grocery keeper, taunts Mrs. Tubbs with the words that she can well afford to be patriotic as she has nothing to give to her country, while he is being taxed to death. Nothing to give indeed? She gives her all, and proudly presents her first born son, saying with heart overflowing with patriotism and pride, "America, here's my boy!"

The second act occurs some six weeks later. James is now a private in the training camp near the city. He has just been married to Elsie West, the pretty little Red Cross nurse, and the wedding festivities are broken up by the arrival of Private Redd, who orders him back to camp with the information that spies have been seen at camp and all men on leave are ordered in.

Elsie, the little bride, is injured by a motor truck and is taken to the hospital late at night. Mrs. Tubbs leaves her home to get to the training camp and tell James about Elsie's accident. She arrives at midnight at the camp and finds James on sentry duty. Elsie is calling her husband and Mrs. Tubbs tells him he must go to his wife. James cannot leave his post of duty at midnight, but Mrs. Tubbs insists and takes his place as sentry at the camp.

Major Pepper, an old admirer of Mrs. Tubbs, finds her acting as sentry, and not recognizing her thinks she is a spy and orders her sent to the guard-house. The complications are straightened out the next morning at the home of Mrs. Tubbs and the old-time romance between our heroine and the Major is revived.

Great comedy scenes are introduced during the action of the play by Miss Clingie Vine, a romantic old maid, Scuffles, a lazy boy, and Queenie, a mischievous little girl.

COSTUMES.

MRS. TUBBS—Aged 40. Powdered hair, face wrinkled with soft lead pencil. Old calico dress and limp gingham apron in Act I. Old-fashioned dark dress, bonnet and shawl in Acts II and III.

MRS. MCDOUGAL—Aged 70. White hair. Neat dark dress, bonnet and cloak.

CLINGIE VINE—Aged 40. Cork screw curls. Gaudy dresses in outlandish taste. Should be tall and thin.

MRS. HICKEY—Aged 50. Old-fashioned costumes. Should be short and plump.

ELSIE—Aged 19. Neat dress of Red Cross nurse.

JAMES—Aged 20. Work suit at the beginning of Act I. After that a private's uniform.

SIMON—Aged 55. Short, stout man. Red or bald wig and mustache and whiskers. Old-fashioned clothes, hat and cane.

MAJOR—Aged 45. Uniform of a major. Gray hair and mustache.

REDD AND TIM—Young men each dressed in the uniform of a private.

QUEENIE—Aged 11. Short dresses, striped stockings, pig-tails, etc.

SCUFFLES—Aged 10. Short trousers, worn clothes, patched but neat.

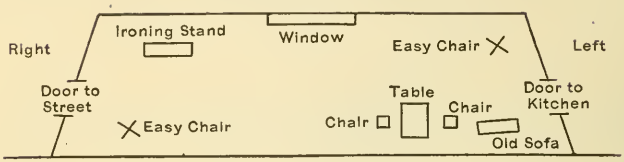
BILLY—Aged about 6. Dressed similarly to SCUFFLES.

PUNKY—Aged 4.

PROPERTIES.

Table.
Old sofa.
Several old chairs.
Cupboard.
Ironing stand, with irons and clothes.
Breakfast on table.
Mackinaw for JAMES.
Dinner box for JAMES.
Sticks of wood for SCUFFLES.
Canes for SEREPTY and SIMON.
Cup and can of mustard for QUEENIE.
Large set of false teeth on floor.
Lamp on table for Act II.
Pots of flowers for Act II.
Wreath of red paper roses for CLINGIE.
Bible on table Act II, Scene 2. Also red table cloth.
Paper book under table cloth.
Spectacles for SIMON.
Letters for CLINGIE.
Tent, arranged with a sheet as described at beginning of Act III.
Camp stool.
Keg.
Lighted candle in old bottle.
Rifles for James, Redd and Tim.
Small American flag on table.

Scene Plot.



STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means right of stage; *C.*, center; *R. C.*, right center; *L.*, left; *1 E.*, first entrance; *U. E.*, upper entrance; *R. 3 E.*, right entrance up stage, etc.; up stage, away from footlights; down stage, near footlights. The actor is supposed to be facing the audience.

MRS. TUBBS DOES HER BIT

Act I.

Scene: *The front room in the Tubbs cabin in Shantytown. See description on page 8 under Scene Plot. Entrances R., to street and L. to rear room. Window at rear.*

Bright music takes up the curtain, but ceases as soon as the dialogue begins. Discovered: Mrs. Tubbs *at rear R. ironing.* James *seated at table front left eating his breakfast.* Queenie *standing near table watching him.*

Mrs. Tubbs. Be sure and make out a good breakfast, James Scotland. The mornin's kind of frosty and I didn't have much to put in your dinner pail for lunch. It does beat all nature how high things is on account of the war. Why even eggs has riz sump'm scand'lous. (*Savagely.*) How do the hens know there's a war over in Europe?

James. Well, as long as I get plenty o' good corn cakes I ain't goin' to worry. And these certainly are good. I dunno how many I've et already.

Queenie. I do. Twelve.

Mrs. T. And you can have twelve more if you want 'em, son. Queenie, go grease the griddle agin.

James. I want 'em all right, maw, but honest I dunno where I'm goin' to put 'em. I'm full clear up to here. (*Draws line with finger across chin.*)

Mrs. T. I put some good cold johnny cake in your box, James, and some stewed persimmons and a big helpin' of baked beans and two er three apples and some of my mustard pickles. It ain't much for a working man's lunch, son, but it's the best I could do.

James. I wouldn't trade it fer a dinner with the president. As long as I can get things like that I ain't goin' to worry about eggs.

Mrs. T. No use o' worryin' no-how. It don't git you

nothing. Look at Miss Clingie Vine, our boarder. She's been worryin' fer a husband fer the last twenty years, worries day and night, and what good does it do? That womern worries so much she ain't nothin' but flesh, skin and bones.

QUEENIE. Maw, why don't you make Scuffles get up? It's most seven o'clock.

MRS. T. My land of love! Has that boy gone back to sleep again? I've done waked him up three times this morning already. (*Goes to door at L.*) Scuffles! (*Pause.*) Scuffles! Ain't you up yet? (*Louder.*) Scuffles Methusalem Tubbs, if you don't want me to come in there and *haul* you out with a dipper of cold water, you stir your stumps. (*Pause.*) He don't hear a word I say. He's in there snorin' like a steam enjine comin' down grade with all brakes off. Scuffles! (*Exit L.*)

JAMES (*putting on mackinaw or rough overcoat at rear*). Well, I've got to be gettin' along.

QUEENIE (*goes to him*). James, did you hear about Karl Klauder?

JAMES. What about him?

QUEENIE. He's volunteered.

JAMES. He did? Good old Karl. Gave up his barber shop and everything, did he?

QUEENIE. Yes. He told Mis' Timmins that his country came first. What do you think of that? And his paw was a German.

JAMES. That's the kind of fellers that make us proud to know. Karl's a regular hero, sis.

QUEENIE. I was wondering. (*Pauses.*)

JAMES. Wondering what?

QUEENIE. Oh, nothing.

JAMES. I know what it is. You was wondering why I don't enlist, wasn't you?

QUEENIE. Well—(*pauses, hangs her head*).

JAMES. Let me tell you that I've done some pretty hard thinkin' for the past month. I want to go. I never wanted anything so much in all my life. I ain't a slacker, sis, I ain't a slacker.

QUEENIE. Of course you ain't, James. If I ever heard anybody call you a slacker I'd give 'em a good kick on the shins.

JAMES. But how can I go to war and leave you and maw and the children all alone? The house ain't paid for yet and you and Scuffles have got to be kep' in school. I didn't have much education when I was a kid, Queenie, and it's kept me back, more'n anything else on earth. So I got to stay and work for you.

QUEENIE. I knew you weren't a slacker anyway.

JAMES. If I thought you and maw and the kids could get along all right I'd volunteer today.

QUEENIE (*gives him lunch box*). We're just as proud of you as if you did. You're the best big brother in Shantytown. Come on, I'll walk to the gate with you. (*They go out at R.*)

Enter MRS. T. *from L., leading* SCUFFLES.

SCUFFLES. Oh, maw, I hate gettin' up worser'n poison.

MRS. T. Now quit your whinin'. I've been up since five o'clock, and so has Queenie. I guess if a couple of women folks can get out of bed, a great big boy like you can.

SCUFFLES. You talk about clothes fittin' me, and my hat fittin' me, and my shoes fittin' me; there ain't nothin' fits me so good as the warm, old feather bed on a cold morning.

MRS. T. Now you hurry up and go out and split me some wood right away.

SCUFFLES. Oh, maw, I hate splittin' wood worser'n poison.

MRS. T. I never saw such a boy. (*Irons.*) The rest of the fambly ain't got a lazy bone in their hull body, and look at you. Look at you, I say!

SCUFFLES (*grunts*). Huh?

MRS. T. Quit your gruntin' and speak out like a huming being. And quit lookin' like a undertaker. Smile a little. It don't cost a cent. Some folks 'ud rather grunt than smile. I ain't never heard a hog laugh yet, but they certainly can grunt.

SCUFFLES. I hate laughin' worser'n poison.

MRS. T. Ain't you got them shoes laced up yet? You're slower'n a worm with the rheumatism. Now go and split the wood and then help Queenie fry some corn cakes for your breakfast.

SCUFFLES. Fry corn cakes? Say, you're makin' a reg'lar womern folks outer me. I hate fryin' corn cakes worser'n poison. (*At door R.*)

MRS. T. I notice you like to eat 'em well enough. Hurry up now and don't have no more argument. I never see sich a boy. You talk and talk and argue and argue. I do declare you're worser'n ——. (*Insert name of prominent lawyer.*) Maybe I'll make you into a lawyer when you grow up, if you study your 'rithmetic.

SCUFFLES. I hate studyin' 'rithmetic worser'n poison.

MRS. T. (*throws wet rolled-up towel at him*). Scat, I say. Fill up the wood box and don't stand there lookin' like a gander in a snowstorm.

SCUFFLES. I hate—

MRS. T. (*throws another towel at him, he dodges and runs out R.*) My, my, my! I never see sich a boy. I dunno what'll ever become of him. Guess I'll have to make a school teacher out'n him. That's what he'll come to in the end (*pauses*), or maybe a policeman. Scuffles 'ud make a lovely policeman.

Enter QUEENIE *from R.*

QUEENIE. Maw, what do you think? James Scotland wants to enlist as a soldier.

MRS. T. How do you know?

QUEENIE. He told me so. He said he'd give anything on earth if he could shoulder a musket and go and fight for his country. That's the kind of a brother to be proud of, ain't it? My, if only we was rich.

MRS. T. Now, Queenie, don't you go getting notions in your head. Of course my boy wants to serve his country. Why shouldn't he? Look at his paw. The late Mr. Tubbs was a soldier in the Spanish-American war and went clean over to Cuby a-fightin' them Spanishers. And his grand-

father fit in the war of '65 and got a pension as long as he lived. I tell you, Queenie Sheba Tubbs, you come from fightin' stock. I'm surprised that James Scotland ain't enlisted in spite of everything.

QUEENIE. Who'd take care of us if James went away to war?

MRS. T. I reckon we'd get took care of. If the Lord sees every sparrow that falls I reckon I'm big enough fer Him to see. And then there's your paw's aunt, Serepty McDougal, over at Bitter Crick, who's worth sixty thousand and one foot in the grave and nary a chick er a child to leave it to. Maybe she'd take care of us if James went away to fight for his country. I'm goin' to have a talk with my boy tonight, Queenie, and if he wants to go—go he shall! I'll give him his grandpaw's old revolver and his paw's flag and bid him God-speed. That's the woman's part of the war, honey. Our men folks risk their lives for the old red, white and blue, but the woman is jest as brave who buckles on their swords and tells 'em to go to answer their country's call.

QUEENIE (*at table*). Shall I put away the things, maw, or are you goin' to wait for Miss Vine?

MRS. T. No, I ain't. The last time we woke her up she said she was gettin' her beauty sleep, and I says to myself, "Mollie Tubbs, if sleep'll improve her beauty, let her sleep, fer goodness knows she needs all she kin git!" (QUEENIE *clears table.*) I knowed something was on Jameses mind for the past month, but I never thought he was hankerin' to go to war.

QUEENIE. Oh, maw, he wants to go awful bad. Couldn't we git along without him? Maybe I could get a job in the overall factory.

MRS. T. I dunno, Queenie, but if he wants to go I'm goin' to let him go. This is a big war and there's only one way we kin win, every man, woman and child in the country has got to do his bit! Maybe it ain't much, and maybe it's a good deal, but it's got to be did, and Mollie Tubbs is goin' to do her bit fer Uncle Sam if it's my last act on earth.

QUEENIE. What do you mean by doin' your bit, maw?

MRS. T. My bit means that I'm goin' to send my boy to war, Queenie. He's all I got, honey, but I'll let him go to war.

QUEENIE (*helping* MRS. T. *with the ironing*). But it's so horrible, maw.

MRS. T. Nobody knows better'n me how horrible war is, but when I see the star-spangled banner flyin' in the breeze, when I hear the band playin' Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean or Dixie, and see the brave young boys go marchin' by, I know that if I had *ten* sons, I'd give each one of 'em to my country and be proud to say, "America, here's my boy!"

QUEENIE. But how'll we get along if James Scotland goes to war?

MRS. T. I reckon I kin get a job in the laundry. I ain't worryin' about that.

QUEENIE. Don't you reckon old Aunt Serepty McDougal 'ud help us, maw?

MRS. T. I ain't never received nothin' from our rich relations except advice and a picture postcard, and I ain't goin' to ask 'em now.

Enter SCUFFLES *from R. with small armful of wood.*

QUEENIE. Oh, Scuffles, James Scotland is going to enlist.

SCUFFLES. He is? Honest?

QUEENIE. Yes, and maw's goin' to git a job in the laundry. Maybe you could get a job shinin' shoes.

SCUFFLES. Me? No, I couldn't, and besides I hate shinin' shoes worser'n poison.

MRS. T. Is that all the wood you chopped, Scuffles Methusalem Tubbs?

SCUFFLES. Yes'm. I couldn't chop no more on an empty stomach. I ain't had no breakfast yet.

MRS. T. You're gettin' more like your paw every day. I never see sich a boy. By rights I ought to take you on my knee and give you a good sound spankin'.

SCUFFLES (*whining*). Oh, maw, you wouldn't give me a spankin' on a empty stomach, would yer?

MRS. T. No, I wouldn't. I reckon I'd turn you over.

SCUFFLES. I hate a spankin' worser'n poison.

MRS. T. You go in there in the kitchen and fry yourself some corn cakes. If you can't get up in time for breakfast you eat in the kitchen.

SCUFFLES. Can't you make Queenie fry the cakes? It ain't right fer a boy to fry cakes no how. Makin' a reg'lar womern folks outer me.

MRS. T. Queenie, you go in and wake up Billy Blossom and Punky Dunks. By the time you get 'em dressed Scuffles'll have breakfast ready.

SCUFFLES (*at door L.*). I hate fryin' cakes worser'n poison. (*Exit L.*)

QUEENIE. I'll help him, maw. Just as soon as I get the children up. (*Goes to L.*) And after breakfast let's go over and tell James that we've decided to do our bit and let him go to war.

MRS. T. Queenie, honey, I dunno what I'd do without you. You're jest as good as gold, all wool and a wide yard.

QUEENIE (*laughs*). A wide yard, maw?

MRS. T. I mean a yide ward. A yard wide. Anyhow, you're my own little daughter. Now hurry up and wake the babies. (*Exit* QUEENIE *at L.*)

(*Loud rap heard at door at R.*)

SEREPTY MCDOUGAL (*outside R.*). Anybody to home? (*Louder.*) I say, is there anybody to home?

MRS. T. My land of love! (*Goes toward door at R.*) Hold your horses, I'm comin'! (*Opens door.*)

Enter SEREPTY MCDOUGAL, *a woman of seventy, well dressed and walking with stout cane.*

SEREPTY. I'm looking for a party named Tubbs.

MRS. T. My name's Tubbs, but I dunno as I'm much of a party, unless it's a poverty party.

SEREPTY. Wash-lady, I understand?

MRS. T. Yes'm, I wash regularly.

SEREPTY. I haven't lived here long. Maybe I could give you some work.

MRS. T. Thank you. Won't you sit down?

SEREPTY. No time to sit down. I'm staying at the Chalmers Hotel. Come up this afternoon and get the washing.

MRS. T. Yes'm. Name?

SEREPTY. My name is McDougal.

MRS. T. McDougal?

SEREPTY. Yes.

MRS. T. My late husband used to have an aunt named McDougal. Lives over at Bitter Crick.

SEREPTY. Indeed?

MRS. T. I don't suppose you've got any kin folks over at Bitter Creek, have you?

SEREPTY. I have not.

MRS. T. No, I didn't suppose it was likely. Still, McDougal ain't what you might call a common name.

SEREPTY. No, neither is Tubbs.

Enter SCUFFLES *from L.*

SCUFFLES. Maw, make Queenie Sheba come in here and fry me some breakfast. Every cake I fry sticks to the bottom of the skillet.

MRS. T. Run along, Scuffles, I got company.

SCUFFLES. I hate fryin' cakes worser'n poison. (*Exit L.*)

SEREPTY. Got a family, have you?

MRS. T. Yes'm. Three boys and two girls.

SEREPTY. Must be pretty hard on you.

MRS. T. I ain't one to complain. I wouldn't trade ary one of 'em for a king's ransom.

SEREPTY. Was that boy your oldest?

MRS. T. Oh, no. James Scotland's my oldest. He's twenty. He works at the factory.

SEREPTY. Why ain't he in the army?

MRS. T. (*hesitates*). Because, because—

SEREPTY. Got good health, ain't he?

MRS. T. Oh, yes, and he's just crazy to enlist; but we have a hard time to make both ends meet as it is, with me and James both working, and if he went to war—

SEREPTY. Don't you want him to fight for his country?

MRS. T. Don't I? Yes, ma'am. I do, and what's more

he's going to. I was just talking about it as you come in. I ain't goin' to stand in his way. I can get a job somewheres and we'll get along. I've made up my mind. I'm goin' to do my bit. I'm goin' to give 'em my boy.

SEREPTY. It would be foolish of you. He don't have to go until he's twenty-one. Don't you need his wages to support you and the family?

MRS. T. In war times folks has got to make sacrifices. Rich and poor, high and low, we all go to do our bit. I'll work day and night and God is good. I'll put my trust in Him, but my boy is going to fight for his country.

SEREPTY. Get on your bonnet.

MRS. T. My bonnet? What for?

SEREPTY. We're going to find that boy and let him enlist. I reckon I'll do my bit, too. I got an income of four hundred dollars a month and you're the widow of my nephew. I'm your Aunt Serepty McDougal of Bitter Crick. I'm going to help you out.

MRS. T. My aunt? Serepty McDougal? You?

SEREPTY. Don't stop to ask questions. Get your bonnet. If James Scotland wants to go to war, I'll see that he goes, and I reckon I've got enough to take care of his family.

MRS. T. But—

SEREPTY (*interrupting*). Don't stop to talk. Get your bonnet. We'll have that young fellow in the army before the clock strikes noon.

MRS. T. Oh, it's too good to be true. How can I thank you—

SEREPTY (*interrupts*). Don't waste words trying to thank me. Get your bonnet.

MRS. T. You're an angel, Aunt Serepty McDougal. A fallen angel. Fallen right down from the skies. (*Exits L.*)

SEREPTY. An angel? I haven't been called an angel since Sandy McDougal courted me fifty years ago.

Enter MRS. T., *putting on bonnet and shawl.*

MRS. T. I'm all ready. (*Calls.*) Queenie, you mind the babies until I get back.

Enter QUEENIE *from L., followed by* BILLY *and* PUNKY, *the children partly dressed.*

QUEENIE. Where you going, maw?

MRS. T. I'm going to Jameses factory. He's going to join the army. Let's hurry. This is your new aunt, Serepty McDougal.

SEREPTY. We'll be back in half an hour and we'll bring a turkey with us. (*Exits L.*)

MRS. T. Take good care of the house, Queenie, and all of you be good children. I've got to hurry. (*Hurries out R., after kissing the children hastily.*)

BILLY. Where's she going?

QUEENIE. She's going to put James in the army. Ain't it just grand?

BILLY. I wanna be in the army, too.

PUNKY. Punky wanna be in army, too.

QUEENIE. I'll start a little army of my own. Here, put on your shoes. Soldiers has got to wear shoes. (*She helps the children dress.*) Brother James is going to be a great big soldier with a gun and a sword and everything.

BILLY. I wanna gun and a sword and everything.

PUNKY. Me, too. I wanna gun an' everything.

QUEENIE. And he's going to march away to the camp and be a soldier. And he's going to have a uniform and a hat and play on a drum, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom!

Enter SCUFFLES *from L.*

SCUFFLES. Say, ain't we never goin' to have no breakfast at all? Where's maw?

QUEENIE. She's gone away to put James in the army.

SCUFFLES. Is he going to be a soldier? Honest?

QUEENIE. Yes, he is. Here, you help Billy. Take him in the kitchen and wash him under the sink.

BILLY. I don't wanna be washed.

QUEENIE. Soldiers has got to be washed. If you don't get washed you never can join the army. Hurry up!

Enter MRS. HICKEY *from R.*

MRS. HICKEY. Queenie, who was the lady your maw went out with?

QUEENIE. That was Aunt Serepty McDougal.

MRS. H. My, my! I've heard your maw talk about her. She was kin folks to your paw and rich as Queen Victoria. Where did they go?

QUEENIE. After James.

MRS. H. What for? I was settin' by my window and I seen 'em run down the street like the house was afire. I couldn't rest a minute until I'd run over to find out the news.

QUEENIE. James is going to enlist in the army.

MRS. H. Well, well, well!

SCUFFLES. And so am I. I'm going to enlist, too.

BILLY. And so is me. I'm going to 'list.

PUNKY. Me, too.

MRS. H. If that don't beat all. I suppose your rich aunt is goin' to take you all to live with her in the country, ain't she?

SCUFFLES. I wouldn't live in no country. We'd all be rubes. I'd hate livin' in the country worser'n poison.

MRS. H. I knew when they built that camp so close to town that all our boys would be wantin' to join the army.

QUEENIE. I've been out to the camp twice, but they wouldn't let me in.

SCUFFLES. I guess when James gets to be a soldier we kin git in all right. Miss Elsie wants me to join the Boy Scouts.

BILLY. I wanna be a Boy Scout.

PUNKY. Me, too.

MRS. H. Well, I left my breakfast a-cookin' on the stove, so as I could run over and hear the news. I got to be getting back. Where's your lady boarder this morning?

QUEENIE. Miss Vine ain't got up yet.

MRS. H. My, my, my! And it's most eight o'clock. Seems to me that woman don't do nothin' but sleep.

QUEENIE. Sh! She might hear you.

CLINGIE VINE (*outside at L., groans*). Oh, oh, oh! (*Long wail.*)

MRS. H. My stars and punkins, what's that?

QUEENIE. I don't know.

BILLY. Sounds like a ghost.

CLINGIE (*outside*). Help, help! Oh, somebody, help! (*Groans.*)

MRS. H. (*goes to L.*). What is it?

QUEENIE. It's Miss Vine. She sounds like she's sick.

SCUFFLES. Sick? Then we won't never get no breakfast.

Enter CLINGIE *from L., her hair in curl papers. She wears an old wrapper.*

CLINGIE. Oh, Mis' Tubbs! Mis' Tubbs, sump'm awful's happened. (*Looks around.*) Where's Mis' Tubbs?

MRS. H. She's gone to put James Scotland in the army.

CLINGIE (*mumbles*). Queenie, you and the children look all around the floor. (*Holds handkerchief to mouth.*) I've lost 'em.

QUEENIE (*looks on floor, getting on knees, others all do the same, all crawling around*). What is it?

CLINGIE. Oh, I've lost 'em. And if I didn't lose 'em I swallered 'em. And I'm a dead womern. (*Sinks in rocking chair and acts faint.*) Oh!

MRS. H. What is it? What did you lose?

CLINGIE. My teeth.

OTHERS. Your teeth?

CLINGIE. My uppers. Hunt around. Oh, oh! Maybe I swallered 'em.

MRS. H. (*searching all around with the children*). Maybe they're in your room.

CLINGIE. No, no. I looked everywhere. Oh, I swallered 'em. I kin feel 'em. Oh, I'm going to faint.

MRS. H. (*shakes her*). Don't faint. (*Shakes harder.*)

CLINGIE. Oh, I heard 'em rattle. I heard 'em rattle.

SCUFFLES. Do they bite you?

CLINGIE. I dunno. Go and get the doctor.

MRS. H. The Red Cross nurse is over at Clemenses. Go and fetch her, Scuffles. (SCUFFLES *runs out at R.*) Queenie, get her some water. Hurry up!

CLINGIE. Yes, hurry up. Every minute might be my last. They was on my table last night and now they're gone.

MRS. H. Get some hot water, Queenie, and put some mustard in it. (QUEENIE *runs out at L.*)

CLINGIE. I'm real fainty.

MRS. H. (*shakes her*). Don't faint. If you faint now you'll choke to death. Get up and walk around. Keep moving.

CLINGIE. Oh, I can't, I can't!

MRS. H. (*pulls her up and forces her to run back and forth*). Faster, faster! If you faint you're a dead woman. Keep moving. Hurry up!

Enter SCUFFLES *from R., followed by* ELSIE WEST, *in Red Cross uniform.*

ELSIE. Where is she? Scuffles says you've swallowed your teeth.

CLINGIE. My uppers. Oh, I'm real fainty. (*Sinks in chair.*)

Enter QUEENIE *from L.*

QUEENIE. Here's the hot water and the mustard.

ELSIE. That's right. Give me the cup. Where's the mustard?

MRS. H. Make it real hot. (*Puts in a large quantity of mustard.*) That's the only thing that will save you.

ELSIE (*stirs it*). You must drink it right down.

CLINGIE. Oh, I'm dying, I'm dying. I can't drink it.

MRS. H. Hold your nose. Here, I'll hold it for you. (*Does so.*)

ELSIE (*holding cup to her lips*). Drink it all.

CLINGIE (*struggles*). Oh! (*Drinks, then shrieks.*) Oh, I'm poisoned. I'm poisoned. (*Rushes to door at L.*) I'm a dead womern. (*Runs out at L., groaning.* ELSIE *exits L.*)

PUNKY (*has found the teeth, a very large set of uppers, on the floor, she holds them out to* MRS. H.). Teeth!

MRS. H. What's that?

PUNKY. Teeth.

MRS. H. My stars and punkins, if the baby ain't found Miss Clingie's uppers.

QUEENIE. Give 'em here, Punky. (*Takes them.*) Oh, Miss Clingie, Miss Clingie, we found your teeth. (*Exits L.*)

BILLY. Say, Scuffles, when we goin' to eat?

SCUFFLES. That's just what I want to know.

MRS. H. That reminds me, I ain't had no breakfast yet. (*Suddenly.*) My stars and punkins, I left my breakfast cookin' on the stove, and I'll bet a doughnut it's all burnt black and blue. (*Runs out R.*)

Enter ELSIE *from L.*

ELSIE. Now, children, you must be very quiet. Miss Vine's sick in bed. And you know how hard it is to listen to noise when you're sick.

BILLY. I ain't sick, I'm just hungry.

PUNKY. Me hungy, too.

ELSIE. Haven't you had any breakfast yet?

SCUFFLES. We was just startin' it when Miss Clingie lost her uppers.

ELSIE. Where's Mrs. Tubbs?

SCUFFLES. Gone down to Jameses factory. She's goin' to let him go to war.

ELSIE. James going to enlist?

SCUFFLES. Yes he is—and I'm glad of it. Now maybe you'll pay a little attention to me once in a while.

ELSIE. Why, Scuffles, I do. You're just the same as my little brother.

SCUFFLES. I ain't so little. Say, Miss Elsie, when I put on long pants will you marry me?

ELSIE. Well, maybe. But that will be such a long time to wait. I'll be a real old lady by that time.

SCUFFLES. I bet if it was brother James Scotland you'd wait for him. Say, honest, do you like him better'n me?

ELSIE. I like you both. And Billy and Punky and Queenie and Mrs. Tubbs and the whole family.

BILLY. And the goat—do you like the goat, Miss Elsie?

ELSIE. Yes, indeed, Billy. I'm awfully fond of the goat.

SCUFFLES. But you like James the best, don't you? Mis' Hickey said he was your beau.

ELSIE. Mrs. Hickey says a good many things besides her prayers.

Enter QUEENIE *from L.*

QUEENIE. Miss Vine's asleep and her uppers are in. Maybe she'll swallow 'em sure enough this time.

ELSIE. Come, Queenie, let's go in and get breakfast. I'm sure the children are hungry.

BILLY. You bet your boots I'm hungry.

PUNKY. Me, too.

SCUFFLES. Say, Miss Elsie, if James goes away to war can I be your only beau?

ELSIE. Why, of course you can. But if you are to be my beau you'll have to be a real good little man and do everything your mother wants you to and never say that you hate things worser'n poison.

SCUFFLES. Gee, you're askin' a whole lot.

ELSIE. And then you must join the Boy Scouts.

SCUFFLES. I think I'd like that. I asked Mis' Hickey if she thought you'd ever marry me and she said not until I raised a mustache. And I've got one started.

ELSIE. Scuffles, what do you mean?

SCUFFLES. I mean I've got the money started to get one.

ELSIE. A mustache?

SCUFFLES. Bet your life. It comes in a bottle and you rub it on your lip and it costs thirty cents. I got nine cents saved up already.

ELSIE. But I don't want you to have a mustache, honey. I like you better just as you are.

QUEENIE. Humph! You couldn't raise a mustache if you tried. You ain't old enough.

SCUFFLES. Could too. I'm most as old as you.

QUEENIE. Ain't neither. You're just a little bit of a kid.

ELSIE. Now don't quarrel. Birds in their little nests agree.

QUEENIE. I know, but I ain't a bird.

ELSIE. Who wants to help me get breakfast?

ALL. I do, I do, I do!

ELSIE. Then come along. Scuffles, if you're a real good boy I'll help you join the Boy Scouts.

QUEENIE. And what'll you do fer me?

ELSIE. I'll take you out to the camp some day and we'll watch James Scotland drill.

SCUFFLES. You don't think about nothin' but James Scotland all the time.

ELSIE. Come on. We've got to get breakfast. (*Exit L. with children.*)

Enter MRS. T. *from R. followed by* MRS. H.

MRS. T. (*talking as she enters*). And he passed a perfect physical examination. A, number one. And Aunt Serepty McDougal is with him now and she's going to buy him a uniform. The man told her the government furnished the clothes, but she's so proud of James that she decided maybe the government's clothes wasn't good enough, or warm enough, or fancy enough, and so she's going to buy him a whole outfit, shoes, shirt, cap and everything from the skin out. (*Removes bonnet and shawl.*)

MRS. H. I allers heard she was rich. And ain't it nice fer her to stand by you now?

MRS. T. We're her nearest relatives and she says I'm not to take in washing any more. I told her I couldn't eat the bread of charity without turning over my hand, and so she's going to make me her housekeeper.

MRS. H. My, my, ain't that nice!

MRS. T. And she's got a automobile and seven cows and horses and bees and a farm and an apple orchard and six hired men. What do you think of that? Six!

MRS. H. And are you going to move to the country?

MRS. T. Not as long as James stays here at the training camp. Of course as soon as he is sent across the ocean we'll all move out to Bitter Crick. (*Looks around.*) Where's the children? (*Goes to door L.*) Excuse me a minute, Mis' Hickey, till I look after the children. (*Exits L.*)

MRS. H. My, my, what good luck Mollie Tubbs does have. But she deserves it. She's as honest and bright as a new penny, and as cheerful as a cage full of monkeys.

Enter SIMON RUBBELS *from R. He wears red or gray*

wig and whiskers, old-fashioned clothes, overcoat, muffler, hat and cane.

SIMON RUBBELS. Morning!

MRS. H. Morning, yourself.

SIMON. You ain't living here now, air you?

MRS. H. Not so'z you can notice it, Simon Rubbels.

SIMON. Seems like every time I come here to collect my rent I find you here.

MRS. H. Well, it worries me jest about as much as it does you. There's only one way to stop it. You'd better quit comin' fer your rent.

SIMON. Now, Ellen Hickey—

MRS. H. Don't you Ellen Hickey me, Simon Rubbels. I've paid my rent, like a good honest woman, and I don't want nothin' to do with you until you put up a new fence in my front yard and a new coat of paint on the house and mend the kitchen door and put in them two winder panes that's been knocked out more'n a year. And if you don't do it, I'm going to move.

SIMON. Just as you please. I'm thinkin' about raisin' your rent anyhow the first of the month.

MRS. H. Why, you old skin-flinted miser, you! If I was a man I'd give you a punch on the nose. I'm going to move, Simon Rubbels, outer your old ramshackle house. I'm payin' enough rent to live in a flat down town. Raise my rent indeed! (*Crosses to R.*) You'd orter pay me fifteen dollars a month fer livin' in sech a moth-eaten, worm-riddled, sun-blistered, wind-shook, tottering old Noah's ark where the snow comes in in winter and the rain comes in in summer, with squirrels and sparrows runnin' round in the attic, mice in the bedrooms, rats in the cellar, roaches in the sink and spiderses and malaria and mildew from front to back and from top to bottom. I'm concluded, I'm done, I'm finished, I'm through, and I'm going to move. And you can just put that in your pipe and smoke it. (*Flounces out R., slamming door in his face as he tries to follow her.*)

SIMON. You bet you're goin' to move, or I'll have the

police put you out. Every time I see that womern I feel jest like gettin' down on my bended knees and singin' the doxology because I'm a widower.

Enter MRS. T. *from L.*

MRS. T. Why, it's Mr. Rubbels. Good morning, Mr. Rubbels. (*Down C.*)

SIMON. Morning. I come for my rent. (*At L.*)

MRS. T. Well—er (*hesitates*).

SIMON. Well, what?

MRS. T. I'm awfully sorry, Mr. Rubbels, but I can't let you have it this morning. I had hoped to get some money from the places I wash for, but I ain't had time to collect it.

SIMON. That ain't my fault. I've got my debts to pay and how can I pay 'em, unless you pay me? That's what I want to know. How can I pay 'em?

MRS. T. But I mean to pay you, Mr. Rubbels. Can't you come around tomorrow?

SIMON. No, I can't. Think I ain't got nothin' else to do except just to be runnin' around here for my rent. I'm a busy man, Mollie Tubbs, and when money's owing to me —I want it.

MRS. T. Yes, sir, I know that. I'd let you have it, if I could. And tomorrow I'm sure I'll have it for you.

SIMON. I've got to pay my garage bill this afternoon. I've had to buy two new tires for my Ford.

MRS. T. I'm sorry.

SIMON. No, you aint; you're glad of it.

MRS. T. I just paid my grocery bill and it was more than I expected. Everything's so high nowadays.

SIMON. Of course it is. And it's all on account of the war. If we hadn't a been rushed into this here war agin our wills things 'ud be just as cheap as ever.

MRS. T. But we had to go to war, Mr. Rubbels. It was forced on us. They sank our ships, they fired on innocent women and children—

SIMON. Bah!

MRS. T. It's true, every word of it. We didn't want to go to war, the Lord knows, but what was we goin' to do?

SIMON. It's just a scheme to make millionaires outer the big bugs, that's what it is. They wanted to get us into war so'z they could boost the price of everything and make more millions. It's all fer the benefit of the millionaires.

MRS. T. Simon Rubbels, that ain't so. It's for your benefit and my benefit. It's for the uplifting of humanity. It's for the star-spangled banner.

SIMON. Bah!

MRS T. (*advances to him in threatening manner*). Don't you dare to say bah to the star-spangled banner, Simon Rubbels. Don't you dare insult my flag and my country. I ain't much, I know that, I'm only a poor widowed washwoman livin' in the slums of Shantytown, but I'm an American and I'll stand up fer my country and fer my flag!

SIMON. (*sneers*). Very heroic. I'm in favor of peace myself.

MRS. T. Makes no difference if you are. Your country is at war. This is its hour of peril. It ain't fer the likes of us to decide whether we're to have war or peace. We ain't the President. If he says Peace, then I'm fer peace, and if he says War, I'm fer war.

SIMON. Well let him fight it then, it ain't *my* war.

MRS. T. It *is* your war, 'cause it's your land that's in danger, it's your flag that's been trod under foot. These brave boys who've answered their country's call, look what they're giving up—their jobs, their futures, their money, their lives maybe, leaving their homes and their fathers and mothers and wives and little children, and all fer what, Simon Rubbels? *Fer you!* Fer your protection, fer your honor, fer your flag!

SIMON. You don't understand. Women can't understand things like this.

MRS T. It's *you* who don't understand! It takes patriotism and honor and love to understand, Simon Rubbels.

SIMON. Oh, it's easy enough for you to talk this way. You're a widow and you ain't got nothin'. They're taxing me to death. That's why I'm agin it. But it don't affect you. They don't ask nothin' of you, because you're poor

and ain't got nothing. You call it your flag and your country, but I'm the one that's called on to support it, I'm the one that has to pay the taxes, what have you got to give?

Enter JAMES *from R., in uniform.*

MRS. T. What have I got to give? (*Throws her arm around her son's shoulder*). This is what I've got to give! My boy, and he's worth more to me than all the money in the land, but I give him gladly. It's the proudest moment of my life right now, when I can say, "America, here's my boy!" That's what I've got to give.

TABLEAU: JAMES *standing at R.* MRS. T. *at R. C., her right arm over his shoulder.* SIMON, *baffled and ashamed, turns aside at L.*

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE I. *Same set as Act I, but an afternoon about six weeks later than the preceding act. Table at C. set for supper. White cloth on table. Bright lamp on table. Several pots of flowers around stage. The ironing stand, etc., of Act I has been removed.*

TIME: *Late afternoon.*

Discovered at rise of curtain SEREPTY *seated in easy chair down L.,* MRS. H. *seated in rocking chair down R.* CLINGIE *at rear of table, facing audience and arranging the table.*

SEREPTY. What time is it now, Miss Vine?

CLINGIE. It ain't five yet.

SEREPTY. They ought to be here pretty soon. My, how nice the table looks, don't it, Mis' Hickey?

MRS. H. It sure does. We borrowed all the flowers in Shantytown to make the room look kind o' gay like. We don't have many weddings down here in this part of town.

CLINGIE. Not military weddings anyhow. I think it's real romantical. A soldier in the army marryin' a Red

Cross nurse, and James Scotland is such a handsome soldier, too.

SERepty. Of course he is. He takes after my side of the family. Mrs. Tubbs is real nice and awfully handy but she ain't what you might call a good-looker.

MRS. H. Handsome is as handsome does is what I say. Mollie Tubbs is jest as good as gold and I dunno what we're goin' to do here in Shantytown without her. I don't see, Mis' McDougal, why you don't settle down here with Mollie and the children and make this your home instead of moving 'em all out to the country.

SERepty. I couldn't stand it here. And besides the country is the proper place to bring up children. I know. I brought up ten of 'em. Mollie's just crazy to go and so are all the children and we're going to move to Bitter Creek in the morning.

CLINGIE. (*sits at rear.*) I dunno what I'm goin' to do when Mis' Tubbs moves. I know I can't find another landlady near as nice and obliging as she is. I reckon I'll have to get married just in self defense.

MRS. H. Married? Why Clingie Vine you ain't thinkin' about gettin' married, are you?

CLINGIE. Of course I am.

MRS. H. At your age?

CLINGIE. I ain't so very old, Ellen Hickey, and you know it. Of course I ain't what you might call a giddy young thing in short skirts, but I've got a perposal a hangin' over my head, as it were, and if Mrs. Tubbs moves to the country there ain't nothin' left fer me to do but to enter into the holy wedlocks of matrimony.

MRS. H. Why, I didn't know you had a beau.

CLINGIE. I didn't know it myself until last Tuesday. It's real romantical. Here I've been knowin' him fer years and years and years and he's been knowin' me, but neither of us had the gumption to know that we was in love. Then all of a sudden it struck him, jest like little Cupid shootin' him in the heart with a little arrow. It come all of a sudden like the measles er the influenzy, and now he says he's just

broke out all over with love and he wants me to get married at once.

MRS. H. And who is he, Clingie?

CLINGIE. It's Mr. Rubbels. Just think Simon Rubbels wants me to be his blushin' little bride.

MRS. H. Simon Rubbels?

CLINGIE. Yes. He's writ me three of the loviest letters you ever saw.

MRS. H. But surely you ain't in love with him, are you? Clingie Vine, you orter have better sense. He's mean and stingy and clost as the paper on the wall. Everybody in Shantytown knows that. He's the man who tried to keep James Scotland out'n the war.

SEREPTY. He is, is he? Well, I guess he didn't succeed. Miss Vine, you take an old woman's advice and if Simon Rubbels comes putterin' around after you, you give him a clout on the head with a rollin' pin.

CLINGIE. Oh, I couldn't do that, when he thinks so much of me, too. I'm goin' to marry him as a sort of a experiment. Then ef I ain't satisfied I kin git a divorce. It's real fashionable to git a divorce once in a while.

SEREPTY. Marriage is no holiday affair, Clingie, to be donned like a garment and then cast aside when the style changes. If you take him you got to take him for better or for worse.

MRS. H. And it'll be fer worse, as sure as I'm a livin' woman.

SEREPTY. A man and his wife should jog along as harmoniously as the right hand and the left, that help each other and yet don't seem to know it. As the right hand and the right eye sympathize with the left, so should married folks sympathize with each other.

MRS. H. And harken to me, Clingie Vine, if you marry Simon Rubbels, you'll need all the sympathy you can get.

SEREPTY. Are you in love with him, Clingie?

CLINGIE. I dunno'z I'm what you might call in love with him, but I think he's got real nice manners.

MRS. H. Nice manners, cat's foot! He's a red headed

hippopotamus, Clingie Vine, if there ever was one on this green earth, and if you go listenin' to his soft soap you'll rue the day, mark my words, you'll rue the day.

CLINGIE. But he writes lovely letters. I never did read sich lovin' feelings, not even in a novel book. He must be awful romantical.

SEREPTY. I ain't seen him around here courtin' you none.

CLINGIE. We ain't got that far yet. He ain't spoke a word to me with his mouth. All he's done is to write loving letters.

MRS. H. Well, you listen to me. Put them letters in the kitchen stove and send him about his business.

CLINGIE (*rises*). Oh, I couldn't do that. I'm too tender hearted to cause him any pain. He's comin' over here tonight and I feel so romantical over Jameses wedding with Elsie that I've jest about decided to say yes. (*Giggles.*) Ain't I the silly little thing?

SEREPTY. You certainly are.

CLINGIE. I think it's most time for the bride and the groom to be coming home. Seems to me it takes 'em a awful long time to git married. I hope the children don't cut up no tricks at the parson's.

SEREPTY. Mollie Tubbs had orter left them children at home. A wedding at the minister's isn't any place for a passell of children.

CLINGIE. I think I'd better put the tea kettle on. (*Goes to door L.*) A war time wedding is so romantical. (*Sighs.*) Ah, me! It won't be many days until I'm having a wedding of my own. Me and Simon. (*Giggles.*) Oh, my maw always said I'd marry a fat man and now I'm goin' to do it. Ain't I the silly little thing? (*Giggles and exits L.*)

SEREPTY. I never saw a wedding yet that wasn't the starting point of two or three other weddings.

MRS. H. I'll bet Clingie Vine was makin' up all that talk about Simon Rubbels out of her own head. I don't believe he's goin' to marry her no more'n he's goin' to fly, and when Simon Rubbels flies I'm ready to give up my wings.

SEREPTY. Why don't you offer to board Clingie after Mollie goes to the country?

MRS. H. She's too romantical for me. She don't do nothin' but loll around the house and read novel books and spend her interest money.

SEREPTY. What surprises me is that this Simon Rubbels comes a courtin' Clingie Vine when Mollie Tubbs is in the same house. It's a wonder he ain't after Mollie.

MRS. H. Humph! Mollie Tubbs wouldn't marry him if he was the last man on earth and was worth a million. She can't stand him no more'n I kin.

SEREPTY. Mollie's been a widder now fer four years and she's a wonderful woman. It allers was a surprise to me why she married Tubbs. She had plenty of chances when she was young. Why this here Major Pepper that we read so much about in the papers used to be Mollie's beau.

MRS. H. He did? Well, of all things! And him the commander of the camp right here in town. Why Mollie might have been a rich lady.

SEREPTY. Yes, she might. But she chose Tubbs and never regretted her choice. Folks say John Pepper was awful disappointed. That's why he joined the army, and now he's the boss of the whole camp and Mollie's a widder. I got a good notion to take her out to the camp tomorrow to see him.

MRS. H. Ain't he never got married ner nothin' in all these years?

SEREPTY. No, he's still a bachelor and just a rollin' in money. Maybe if he learns that James Scotland is the son of his old sweetheart he'll make him a general or something. At any rate I'm going out to visit the camp. There's over two thousand men out there and they've got a regular little city, with streets and everything. How far out is it?

MRS. H. It's about five miles out on the Jimmerson road. I'd love to go out and see it myself but I never get a minute to myself.

Enter CLINGIE *from L.*

CLINGIE. They're comin'. I saw 'em out of the window.

Oh, ain't it romantical? (*Sings.*) "Here comes the bride, here comes the bride!"

MRS. T. (*heard outside at R.*). Now all of you come right into the house. James, did you pay the driver?

JAMES (*outside*). Yes, indeed.

Enter from R. MRS. T., *carrying* PUNKY, *followed by* SCUFFLES *and* BILLY, *then* TIM GRAHAM *and* QUEENIE, *arm-in-arm, and after a slight pause* JAMES *and* ELSIE, *also arm-in-arm.*

MRS. T. Come right in! Oh, Aunt Serepty, it was the loveliest wedding. (*Removes bonnet and shawl, assisted by* MRS. H.) Ellen, I wish you could a been there. It was so solemn and James Scotland looked so handsome in his regimentals, and so did Elsie. I just cried fer joy.

BILLY. Oh, look at the table. What we goin' to have? A party?

SCUFFLES. You bet we are. Got cake and pie and everything. I wisht James Scotland 'ud get married every day.

JAMES (*to* ELSIE). Welcome home, Elsie.

CLINGIE. Oh, I jest gotta kiss the bride. Congratulations, Mrs. Tubbs. (*Shakes hands with* ELSIE *and kisses her.*)

ELSIE. Thank you, Miss Clingie.

(MRS. H. *and* SEREPTY *are busy shaking hands with* JAMES *and congratulating the bridal pair.* TIM *stands bashfully by door R. All remove hats and wraps.*)

QUEENIE. It was the loveliest wedding I ever saw, wasn't it, maw?

MRS. T. It certainly was. Oh, Mr. Graham, I most forgot you. I want to make you 'quainted with Miss Clingie Vine, our lady boarder.

CLINGIE (*goes to him, takes his hand*). Oh, a soldier man, ain't that romantical? I jest love the military. Are you a single man?

TIM GRAHAM (*bashfully*). Yes, ma'am. I ain't never been married at all.

CLINGIE (*retaining his hand*). Why, you poor thing.

Every young soldier goin' away to war had orter git married I'm real glad I met you.

TIM (*trying to pull hand away, but not too vigorously as he is too bashful*). Nobody would have me.

CLINGIE. Yes they would, too. There's plenty of us young girls who'd just love to be a soldier's wife. It's so romantical. (*Shaking his hand.*) I'm so glad I met you.

TIM. Thank you.

CLINGIE. How 'ud you like to have me knit you a nice little pink sweater?

TIM. Oh, I dunno.

CLINGIE (*holding his hand*). I'm going to do it! Now don't tell me that you won't wear it. I'll make it fer you with my own fair hands and when you are in the heat of battle and have on my little pink sweater you must think of me far away in Shantytown.

TIM (*pulls hand away*). All right; I'll think of you all right.

MRS. T. (*at rear L. with children*). My, my, Scuffles, how on earth do you get such dirty hands?

SCUFFLES. I dunno, maw. They just come that way.

MRS. T. Well, you go right out to the kitchen sink and wash 'em. I ain't going to have no such looking hands at my wedding table.

SCUFFLES (*whines*). Oh, maw, I hate washing hands worser'n poison.

MRS. T. Oh, ho, y' do, do you? Well, you don't get nary a bite to eat less'n you wash your hands. You look like the spotted boy in the circus. Lemme look at you, Queenie Sheba. (*Examines her.*)

MRS. H. (*at rear C. with* JAMES, ELSIE *and* SEREPTY; *they have been talking together in pantomime, as do the other groups*). Well, James Scotland, I wish you well. You got a good little bride. Marriage ain't what it's cracked up to be and there ain't no tellin' how yours is goin' to turn out, but I wish you well all the same. I read about a soldier who married a gal last year and it wasn't more'n two months

till they was both in the divorce court. Marriage ain't no picnic. I know, 'cause I've been married three times.

ELSIE. Why, Mrs. Hickey, you must have liked it or you wouldn't have tried it so often.

Mrs. H. Liked it? No, ma'am! But the men jest wouldn't let me alone. I jist had to marry 'em to git rid of 'em.

CLINGIE (*down R., talking to* TIM). And I'll make you a red flannel thing to go round your throat, too. In case you ketch cold over there in the trenches. They say the beds is right damp sometimes. You'll write to me, won't you?

TIM. Yes'm. I guess so. Maybe I will. You see, I ain't much hand at writing letters.

CLINGIE. Oh, you must. It'll be so romantical to receive letters from a gallant soldier lad at the front. And I'll send you my photograph, jest as soon as I kin have some taken on a postcard. (*Giggles.*) Oh, ain't I the silly little thing?

TIM. Yes, ma'am.

CLINGIE. What's that?

TIM. I mean, no ma'am. Honest, I dunno what I *do* mean. (*They talk.*)

Mrs. T. Why, Queenie Sheba Tubbs, just look at your nose!

QUEENIE. I can't, maw. How can I look at my nose?

Mrs. T. It's got a black spot on it about a mile wide.

QUEENIE. All right, maw, I'll wash it off.

SCUFFLES. What, your nose?

QUEENIE. No, smartie, the black spot. I always wash before I eat anyhow. The teacher says if we don't we're liable to get the food full of Germans and then they'll get inside of us and make us sick.

SCUFFLES. Humph, I'll bet a German never could get inside of me.

QUEENIE. They can, too. Millions and millions of 'em, if you don't wash. The teacher said so.

MRS. T. Well, I dunno about that, but there's the sink waitin' fer all of you, so start your boots.

SCUFFLES. Maw, I d' want to. I washed this morning out at the horse trough. Honest, I did. Ears and all.

TIM. I think I'd better wash a little, too.

JAMES. Me, too. Come on, Tim, I'll show you the sink. (*They cross to L.*)

CLINGIE (*to* MRS. H., *who has crossed down R. to her*). Don't they look lovely in their uniforms? Oh, it 'ud be so romantical to be a soldier's sweetheart.

MRS. H. But suppose he'd go away to war and leave you. There wouldn't be anything romantical in that.

CLINGIE. No, that 'ud be real pathetical.

TIM. Excuse us. (JAMES *and* TIM *go out at L.*)

MRS. H. Clingie Vine, I'm astonished at you. You was a flirtin' with that soldier man. Ain't you ashamed? I thought you was engaged to marry Simon Rubbels!

CLINGIE. Well, I ain't exactly engaged yet. He writ me a letter and said he was comin' over tonight. So I hain't engaged to him yet, and if Mr. What's-his-name in there purposes to me first, why maybe I'll accept *him*. A soldier sweetheart is so romantical.

MRS. T. Elsie, honey, come in here in Clingie's room if you want to fix your hair before the wedding supper, although you're jest about perfect already. Honest, you're the sweetest bride I ever laid eyes on.

ELSIE. Oh, Mother Tubbs, you mustn't spoil me. Come along. (*Goes out L. with* MRS. T. *and* SEREPTY.)

CLINGIE. I think that young man is such a nice lookin' feller, don't you, Mis' Hickey? I'm goin' in my room and put some red paper roses in my hair. A wreath of red roses is awful romantical. Maybe he'll invite me out to see the training camp. I jest love soldiers. (*Crosses to L.*)

MRS. H. Clingie, if there's any chance fer you in the whole world except Simon Rubbels, you take my advice and grab it. I've been married three times and I know by bitter experience that Simon Rubbels won't make a good match. Far be it from me from talkin' about any man, but if ever

there was a red-headed rhinoceros walkin' around Shantytown on two legs, he's the man. Mark well my words, Clingie Vine, he's the man. (*Exits L. while she is talking.*)

CLINGIE (*talking to* MRS. H., *who has gone out at L.*) And yet he writes the loviest letters I ever saw. I never read anything so romantical. (*Exits L.*)

QUEENIE. Did you hear that?

SCUFFLES. She said he was coming over tonight.

QUEENIE. I wonder what he'll say when he gets her letters.

SCUFFLES. Yes, and I wonder what she'll say when she learns that it was you who writ to her and signed his name. I'll bet maw'll give you a good lickin', Queenie Tubbs.

QUEENIE. You did just as much as I did. It was your book I copied 'em out of.

SCUFFLES. Don't tell maw about that book. It cost ten cents. I got it to learn how to make love to Miss Elsie and now she's married to James Scotland. She might a waited fer me.

QUEENIE. We won't tell Miss Clingie that it was us who wrote them letters.

SCUFFLES. It wasn't us, it was you.

QUEENIE. Well, I felt sorry for her. I wanted her to have a beau. And I didn't sign his full name to 'em. I just copied 'em out of the book and signed Simon. And you did as much as me. You smuggled 'em into her room and hid 'em in her knitting bag.

SCUFFLES. Well, I won't tell if you don't. But why did you sign 'em at all?

QUEENIE. What's the use of getting love letters if you don't know who they're from?

BILLY. Look at Punky Dunks. She's gone to sleep.

PUNKY *is asleep in her chair at rear L.*

QUEENIE. I'll put her to bed. Now remember, Scuffles Tubbs, if you tell a single word about them letters I'll tell Elsie and James Scotland that you bought a bottle of stuff at the drug store to make your mustache grow.

SCUFFLES. Don't you dast tell such a thing. It wasn't no good nohow.

QUEENIE. I didn't mean any harm by writin' love letters to Miss Clingie. I just copied 'em out of the book; but now she's taken it to heart and she expects Mr. Rubbels to come over tonight and ask her to marry him, just like I wrote in the letter.

SCUFFLES. I wonder what Mr. Rubbels will do?

QUEENIE. I dunno. He's got two or three letters from her. But if he comes tonight I want to see what happens.

SCUFFLES. So do I. We'll get under the table.

BILLY. Me, too.

QUEENIE. Hush, here comes the men.

Enter JAMES *and* TIM *from L.*

JAMES. Scuffles, you take the children and wash up at the sink. Ain't you hungry?

SCUFFLES. You bet I am.

QUEENIE. Of course we are.

BILLY. Me, too.

JAMES. Then hurry and get all spruced up. (QUEENIE *exits L. with* PUNKY.)

SCUFFLES. I hate sprucing up worser'n poison. (*Exits L. with* BILLY.)

TIM. Say, James, I don't think I can stay for supper with you. I got to be getting back to the camp.

JAMES. I should say not. Why, what kind of a wedding supper could we have without the best man? You're not afraid of the old girl, are you?

TIM. Say, she's a caution, ain't she? She's promised to make me a sweater and a couple of pair of socks. I'd better go back to camp or I'll be a married man in spite of myself.

JAMES. Don't desert me on my wedding night. Be a good pal and stand by me. I won't let Miss Clingie kidnap you.

TIM. Say, what's the matter with that old lady, anyway?

JAMES. Oh, she's just full of sentiment.

TIM. Full of sediment? Gee, that's awful.

JAMES. Not sediment, sentiment!

TIM. Oh!

Enter CLINGIE *from L. wearing wreath of red paper roses.*

CLINGIE. There you are! (*Comes to* TIM.)

TIM (*laughing*). I was just laughing at James. I thought he said you was full of sediment.

CLINGIE. Sir! (*Very indignant.*)

TIM. But he didn't. He only said you was full of sentiment.

CLINGIE. Oh, that's different. And how true it is. Yes, indeed, dear sir. I'm awful romantical. (*Giggles.*) Sometimes I think I'm awfully silly.

Enter MRS. T. *from L., followed by* MRS. H., ELSIE *and* SEREPTY.

MRS. T. I was just givin' the finishing touches to the supper. It's all ready. James, the bride and groom must set at the head of the table. Right here, please. (*They sit facing the audience.*)

CLINGIE. And where am I to set, Mis' Tubbs? Me and this young man want to set together, don't we, Timmy?

MRS. T. You two can set there. (*Points to R., they sit facing the L. entrance.*) Now, Aunt Serepty, you and Mis' Hickey take the other seats and I'll wait on the table.

MRS. H. Mollie Tubbs, you set right down there. I'm going to wait on the table. I'm jest one of the neighbors and you're the bride's mother-in-law.

MRS. T. But I don't like to—

MRS. H. Don't argue, Mollie. There's your place. I've been married three times and I guess I've had plenty of practice in waitin' on folks.

MRS. T. But I've got to keep an eye on the children.

SEREPTY. Queenie is putting Punky and Billy to bed and Scuffles is dishing up the ice cream.

MRS. T. He is. Then I'll bet we run short. He'll eat two dishes for every one he puts on the tray.

JAMES. Don't worry, maw. Let him have all he wants. I want everybody to be just as happy as I am tonight.

CLINGIE. Ain't that romantical?

MRS. H. I'll dish up the soup. (*Exits L.*)

SEREPTY. Seems like somebody ought to say a word or two to the bride.

MRS. T. You talk to 'em, Aunt Serepty.

SEREPTY. I ain't no hand at makin' speeches. You do it, Mollie.

MRS. T. (*rises*). Ladies and gentlemen—

ALL (*applauding*). Good, go on, go on.

MRS. T. This here is the happiest moment of my life. My boy James Scotland is going away to fight for his country and his country's flag. He's enlisted, but before he goes he's decided to get married.

JAMES. Yes, and he acted on what he decided.

MRS. T. Tomorrow we're going to move out to the country and I've got to bid my boy farewell. His wife is going to go back to the hospital tonight and he's going back to the training camp, and it looks like the whole bunch of us was going to be separated, but we ain't. We ain't never going to be separated, for no matter where we are, no matter how far apart we may be, me and the children out in Bitter Crick, the bride here in the city, and maybe James over there in the trenches of France, there is still a tie that binds us all together—the tie of love, and that is the strongest tie on earth. Elsie and James and I are all one; no matter if we are scattered to the four ends of the earth, we're one 'cause we love each other, 'cause our hearts are bound up in each other, 'cause—

(*Sharp rap at door R. All look toward door.*)

JAMES (*rises*). I'll see who it is, mother. (*Goes to door R.*)

CLINGIE. Maybe it's Simon Rubbels. I just can't get him out'n my mind.

JAMES *opens the door and admits* PRIVATE REDD.

REDD (*at door R.*). Private Tubbs?

JAMES. Yes, sir. That's my name.

REDD. And Private Graham?

TIM. Yes, sir. (*Rises and stands with* JAMES *at attention.*)

REDD. Both of you men are on twenty-four hours leave?

JAMES. Yes, sir.

REDD. The leave is cancelled. You will both report at camp at once.

MRS. T. But he's having his wedding supper. Come in, mister, and join us. We don't know you, but that don't make any difference. You're a soldier and that makes you welcome beneath this roof. My son James was just married this afternoon and we're just having a little supper to celebrate his happiness. Come in and set down.

REDD. I'm sorry, madam, but I can't. I'm acting under orders.

JAMES. Wait till we get our hats and we'll be with you in a minute. (JAMES *and* TIM *put on hats, coats, etc.*)

REDD. You see it's this way. All men have been ordered back into camp and the camp is closed to all visitors.

CLINGIE. Is that so? Why?

REDD. Some German spies are thought to be in this vicinity. At least that's what I think. A man and a woman was out at the camp yesterday and they acted suspicious. Are you ready?

JAMES. Ready, sir. Good-bye, Elsie. (*Kisses her.*) And mother! (*Kisses her.*)

CLINGIE (*shaking hands with* TIM). Oh, dear, there ain't anyone to kiss me good-bye. Ain't it pathetical?

REDD. All right. Fall in! (*They fall in.*) Forward, march! (REDD, JAMES *and* TIM *march out at R.*)

MRS. T. (*follows them to the door*). Good-bye, honey. I'll take care of Elsie for you. Good-bye. (*Waves after them.*)

ALL (*crowding to the door at R., waving hands*). Good-night! Good-bye!

CURTAIN.

SCENE 2: *The same as Act II, Scene 1. The curtain is lowered but a few minutes. Remove the supper things from the table and put on a red cloth and lighted lamp. All other furniture the same as in the preceding scene. It is now 8 p. m.*

At the rise of the curtain MRS. T. *is seated at table reading the Bible,* CLINGIE *sits at L. knitting sock and* SEREPTY *at R. knitting a soldier's sweater.*

MRS. T. (*reading*). "The Lord hath wrought a mighty salvation for us. We got not this by our own sword, neither was it our own arm that saved us; but thy right hand, and thine arm and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favor unto us.

"The Lord hath appeared for us; the Lord hath covered our heads, and made us to stand in the day of battle. The Lord hath appeared for us; the Lord hath overthrown our enemies, and dashed into pieces those that rose up against us.

"Therefore, not unto us, O Lord, not unto us; but unto thy name be given the glory. The Lord hath done great things for us, for which we rejoice. Our help standeth in the name of the Lord who hath made heaven and earth. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth forever."

SEREPTY (*rises*). Well, I think I'll be getting to bed. It's pretty near half-past eight and we've got to get an early start to the country in the morning.

MRS. T. The train leaves at ten o'clock.

SEREPTY. That means that we'll have to get up at six. I believe in being forehanded.

CLINGIE. I'll be skeerd to death staying all alone here in this house for the rest of the week. I suppose I'll be married some time next week.

MRS. T. I do hope Elsie got home all right. I'd orter gone with her. It gets dark so soon and she had to go clear across the city. I told James I'd take care of her and I'd never forgive myself if anything 'ud happen.

SEREPTY. I'm going to set my alarm clock for half-past

five. I'd mortally hate to have that train go off to Bitter Crick and leave us. (*Crosses to door L.*) Good-night, Mollie. Good-night, Clingie.

MRS. T. Good-night. If there's anything you want, Aunt Serepty, just you call out. I put the alarm clock in your room.

SEREPTY. Good-night. (*Exit L.*)

CLINGIE. Oh, Mollie, I feel so nervous. Simon Rubbels is comin' over tonight and the fatal minute has almost approached. Fer years I've been a single lady living all alone, but Simon has discovered me and I'm going to marry him or bust.

MRS. T. Now, Clingie, don't you do anything you'll be sorry for later on.

CLINGIE. Oh, I won't be sorry. Folks say he's a hard man, but I'm going to reform him.

MRS. T. You can't do it. Take my advice, Clingie, and never marry a man to reform him. You can't make an omelette out of a bad egg, and a bad man's a hull lot worse.

CLINGIE. But I couldn't call Simon Rubbels a real bad man.

MRS. T. Maybe he ain't as bad as he's painted, but there ain't no angel wings a-sproutin' out'n his shoulders, Clingie, and I've noticed that his breath smells a heap more like brimstone than it does like angel cake.

CLINGIE. Yes, but he writes the loviest letters. Never in all my life have I read anything so romantical. How do I look this evening, Mis' Tubbs? (*Funny pose, with right index finger placed to right cheek.*)

MRS. T. Jest like you always do.

CLINGIE (*disappointed*). Oh, I thought my costoom set me off a little better than usual. I want to look real languishing when Simon says the fatal words that'll make me his'n. I wonder if I orter have sump'm on my head.

MRS. T. You orter have a flaxseed poultice, that's what you orter have.

CLINGIE. Why, Mis' Tubbs, I do believe you're jellix.

MRS. T. Who, me? Why, Clingie Vine, I wouldn't—

(*changes tone*) but what's the use? What do you want on your head?

CLINGIE. Oh, I think a lace drapery, or sump'm like that, 'ud make me look kinder kittenish.

MRS. T. I got a lace tidy in my chest you can wear.

CLINGIE. A lace tidy in your chest? Oh, that'll be so romantical. And would you lend me the loan of your kid gloves? They look so high-toned.

MRS. T. (*rises*). Come to my room, Clingie, and I'll fix you up as good as I can. (*Exits L.*)

CLINGIE. I'm so anxious to make a good impression on Mr. Rubbels. Men allers like us girls to be all fussed up. (*Giggles.*) Oh, Clingie, Clingie, ain't you the giddy little thing? (*Exits L.*)

There is a pronounced pause, then enter SCUFFLES *and* QUEENIE *from L., wearing night-gowns. They peek in before they make their entrance, then sneak down C.*

SCUFFLES. He ain't come yet. I'm going to hide under the table.

QUEENIE. Where's the book?

SCUFFLES (*finds paper-back book under table cloth*). Here it is. I keep it hid.

QUEENIE. Give it to me. I want to see if they talk like it says in the book. I ain't never heard lovers talk.

SCUFFLES (*gets under table*). I hope maw don't catch us.

QUEENIE (*looking at the book*). Oh, Scuffles, this book tells how to propose and everything. It's just grand.

MRS. T. (*speaks outside at L.*). Now, Clingie, you look out of sight.

QUEENIE *drops book on floor and hurries under the table. Enter* MRS. T., *followed by* CLINGIE.

CLINGIE. Oh, I feel so nervous.

MRS. T. What makes you so sure he's coming over tonight, Clingie?

CLINGIE. He wrote such a nice letter and gave it to Scuffles to give to me. So I wrote back and told him to come tonight. I said you were going to Bitter Crick tomorrow,

and that if he meant business to call on me tonight, that I was all ready to give him his answer. Oh, I'm so nervous.

(*Knock heard on door at R.*)

MRS. T. That must be Simon Rubbels now.

CLINGIE. Oh, it is, it is! Be still, my little fluttering heart, be still. How do I look?

MRS. T. You look all right. Shall I go to the door?

CLINGIE. If you please. (*Sits at L. and poses.*) Oh, I'm so nervous.

MRS. T. *goes to the door at R., opens it and admits* MRS. H.

MRS. H. Oh, Mis' Tubbs, Mis' Tubbs!

MRS. T. Ellen Hickey, what's the matter? You're as pale as a ghost.

MRS. H. It's Jameses wife, Elsie! I was over at the grocery store and they telephoned to you. She's run over by a motor truck.

MRS. T. Elsie run over?

MRS. H. She won't live till morning.

CLINGIE (*standing*). Oh, my nerves, my nerves!.

MRS. T. Keep quiet, Clingie. Where is Elsie, Mrs. Hickey?

MRS. H. They telephoned from the Mercy Hospital. She can't live till morning. It happened when she was going home. She got off'n the street car and a motor truck was going at full speed. It hit her. Oh, Mis' Tubbs, what you going to do?

MRS. T. Clingie, get my bunnet and shawl. Quick! (*Exit* CLINGIE *at L.*)

MRS. H. Her body's all crushed, but she's in her right mind. The doctor at the hospital told me all about it. She wants her husband.

MRS. T. I know, I know. Hurry, Clingie.

Enter CLINGIE *from L. with bonnet and shawl.*

CLINGIE (*helping* MRS. T. *put on bonnet and shawl*). Oh, the poor young thing. And only married this afternoon.

MRS. H. Are you going to the hospital?

MRS. T. (at C.). No. I'm going to the training camp. She wants James. There's plenty of doctors and nurses at the hospital. What she wants is her husband.

CLINGIE (*at L.*). But you can never get way out to the training camp at this time of night.

MRS. T. I'll get there. I promised my boy I'd take care of her and now she's hurt, maybe dying.

MRS. H. Why, the camp is miles away, Mollie. You'll never get there tonight. And it looks like rain.

MRS. T. I seem to hear her calling for him. Calling for her husband, and it 'ud break his heart if he didn't get to see her.

CLINGIE. But you'll get lost.

MRS. T. I'm trusting in the Lord, Clingie. He'll lead me to my boy.

MRS. H. (*at R.*). Here's a five dollar bill. I'll lend it to you. Get a taxicab.

MRS. T. (*takes it*). God bless you, Ellen. Don't worry, Clingie. I'll be back before morning.

MRS. H. I'll go with you as far as the corner. (*Exits R. with* MRS. T.)

CLINGIE. Oh, what a disaster. I'm all of a tremble and feel kind of fainty. (*Sinks in chair at L.*) The poor young thing! Just married this afternoon and run over by a motor truck.

Knock heard at door R. CLINGIE *goes to door and admits* SIMON.

SIMON. Evening.

CLINGIE. Evening, Mr. Rubbels. Oh, have you heard the news?

SIMON. What news?

CLINGIE. Mrs. Tubbses boy Jameses wife was run over and killed by a motor truck tonight and she's gone out to camp to git him to go and see her and she said—

SIMON. Say, what you talking about?

CLINGIE. It was an accident. The little trained nurse was run over by a motor truck and nearly killed.

SIMON. The gal who married James today?

CLINGIE. Yes, sir. She's the one. But lemme take your hat and coat. I'm so rattled I'm almost forgettin' my manners.

SIMON. It ain't necessary to take my hat and coat. What I got to say is short, sweet and to the point. What I want to know is this. What are you writin' me such crazy kind of letters fur? Have you gone clean crazy all of a sudden, or are you trying to git me mixed up in some lawsuit? I dunno what it is, but I won't have it.

CLINGIE. Why, Simon—

SIMON. My name is Rubbels, Miss Vine. Mr. Simon Rubbels.

CLINGIE. I know it is. But after the way you wrote to me I thought—

SIMON (*interrupts*). I wrote to you? What you talking about? I never wrote to you in my life.

CLINGIE. What? Never wrote to me?

SIMON. What 'ud I be writin' to you fer, I'd like to know.

CLINGIE. In your last letter you wanted to marry me.

SIMON. What? Marry you? Who did? Who did?

CLINGIE. You did, and well you know it. I got the letter to prove it. You called me your darling little Clingie.

SIMON. I never. I see what it is. It's a blackmail. You're trying to blackmail me.

CLINGIE. I ain't trying nothing, Simon Rubbels. Didn't you write me a parcel of loving letters? Some of 'em you put in my knitting-bag and some of 'em you gave to Scuffles Tubbs to give to me. Now, didn't you?

SIMON. I did not. Most emphatically I did not. I never writ you a letter in my life. And I never writ a love letter to nobody.

CLINGIE. Then you ain't got serious intentions toward the holy wedlocks of matrimony?

SIMON. I should say not. A widower who gits married agin don't deserve to lose his first wife. Somebody's been stringing you. I ain't aimin' to marry nobody. Lemme see them letters.

CLINGIE. I dunno as I orter. Maybe it's some other Simon who's in love with me.

SIMON. Was they signed Simon Rubbels?

CLINGIE. No, they was signed, "Adoringly yours, until death do us part, your own affectionate, Simon." That's all.

SIMON. That's enough. I should think you could tell by looking at me that I wouldn't write sech truck as that. Do I look adoringly yours? Do I look like your affectionate Simon?

CLINGIE. No, I can't say as you do. You ain't romantical enough.

SIMON. I should say not. There ain't nothing romantical about me. But I'd like to see them letters all the same.

CLINGIE. I've got 'em in my trunk. All tied with pink baby ribbon. I'll get 'em. But you might as well set down and be seated whilst waiting.

SIMON. Don't keer if I do. (*Sits at R.*)

CLINGIE. Maybe you're more romantical than you think you are. (*Giggles.*) Ain't I the silly little thing? (*Exit L.*)

SIMON. Humph! I never writ no letters to that old maid, and I ain't goin' to, ef the court knows itself, and I reckon it do. (*Sees book on the floor, dropped by* QUEENIE.) Hello, what's this? (*Picks it up.*) A novel book. (*Puts on spectacles and reads title laboriously.*) "How to Woo and Win, with Fifteen Letters of Love." Humph! Maybe that's where she got the idee. (*Reads in book.*) "My own darling dewdrop." (*Speaks.*) Darling dewdrop! That's enough to give a pig the dyspepsia. (*Looks at book, muttering to himself.* QUEENIE *and* SCUFFLES *peek at him from under the table.*)

Enter CLINGIE *from L. with letters.*

CLINGIE. Now, Simon Rubbels, I have the proof. (*Dramatically.*) At last I have found the papers!

SIMON. I dunno nothin' about no papers.

CLINGIE. Here's the letters that are signed with your name. (*Shows him one.*) Look at that! It's signed "with a million kissdrops, your little sugar lump, Simon!" And it starts out "My own darling dewdrop."

SIMON. My own darling dewdrop?

CLINGIE (*leans up against him*). Are you making love to me? Oh, Simon!

SIMON. No, I ain't. Does that letter start, "My own darling dewdrop"? (*Looks at the book.*)

CLINGIE (*looks at the letter*). It does.

SIMON (*reading book*). "Your love is like the mighty ocean with a kiss on every wave."

CLINGIE. That's it word fer word. You know it by heart.

SIMON. It's in the book.

CLINGIE. What book?

SIMON. This one. I found it here on the floor. Somebody's been copying love letters out'n this book and sendin' 'em to you signed with my name.

CLINGIE. That book belongs to Scuffles Tubbs. I saw him have it.

SIMON. Ah, ha! And he gave you the letters, too, didn't he?

CLINGIE. Yes, but he said they came from you. (*Pathetically.*) Didn't they? Oh, Simon, have I learned to love and all in vain?

SIMON. It's that boy's fault. Wait till I ketch him, that's all.

(CLINGIE *and* SIMON *are standing at R.* SCUFFLES *is under the table, visible to the audience. Suddenly he sneezes.*)

CLINGIE. What was that?

SIMON. What was what? I didn't hear nothing.

(SCUFFLES *sneezes again,* QUEENIE *drags him under the table, out of sight of audience.*)

CLINGIE. There, didn't you hear that?

SIMON. I heerd something under that table.

CLINGIE. It must 'a' been the cat.

SIMON. It was a sneeze. Did y' ever hear a cat sneeze?

CLINGIE (*clings to him*). Oh, Simon, I'm skeerd. Maybe its burglars or ghostesses er sump'm.

SIMON (*advancing toward table*). Well, I'm going to see what it is.

CLINGIE (*pulls him back to R. by coat-tails*). Don't you do it, Simon. Maybe you'll be shot in the fracas.

SIMON. I ain't never been shot in a fracas yet. There's sump'm under that table and I'm going to have it out.

CLINGIE. No, no. (*Drags him to R.*) Fer my sake, Simon, don't risk your life.

SIMON. Lemme alone. (*Jerks away from her, goes to table, bends over, looking under table, his feet wide apart.*) Now you come out er I'll come under there and git you.

(SCUFFLES *crawls between his feet and rushes to L.*)

CLINGIE (*shrieks*). Oh, it's a ghost, it's a ghost! (*Screams loudly and sinks in chair at R., kicking feet up and down and screaming.*)

SIMON (*gets up, runs after* SCUFFLES, *who dodges around the chair at R.*). I'll get ye, I'll get ye.

SCUFFLES. You lemme alone. Maw, maw!

(SIMON *chases him around chair at R.,* SCUFFLES *runs to L. and dodges around table,* SIMON *after him.*)

CLINGIE (*rises and comes C.*). Help, fire, police, murder!

(SCUFFLES *gets back of* CLINGIE *and holding her between himself and* SIMON, *dodges around her. At last* SIMON *catches* SCUFFLES *at C.*)

SIMON. I've got ye; I've got ye.

QUEENIE (*rolls out from under table*). You let my brother alone. Don't you dasst to touch him. (*Jumps at* SIMON'S *back, pulling him away from* SCUFFLES, *who jumps down off the stage into the audience.*)

CLINGIE. Oh, it's another one. It's a pair of ghostesses. (*Faints in chair at L. with a loud scream.*)

(SCUFFLES *runs up the aisle of the audience, pursued by* SIMON, *who jumps from stage and rushes after him.*)

QUEENIE. Oh, I'm going to faint, I'm going to faint. (*Screams and falls on top of* CLINGIE.)

SIMON. I got ye. (*Catches* SCUFFLES *and leads him to stage.*)

SCUFFLES. I didn't write the old letters. Queenie writ 'em. Queenie writ every word out'n my book.

CLINGIE. You did? (*Turns* QUEENIE *over her knee, removes slipper and spanks her,* QUEENIE yelling.)

(SIMON *sits at R., turns* SCUFFLES *over his knee, removes slipper and spanks him.*)

QUICK CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE: *The Military Camp at midnight. The stage is very dark during the entire action of this act, and scenery is not necessary, simply a dark-covered clothes-horse or two screens with dark drapery over them, any dark covering, in fact, will answer for background and sides.*

Tent down R. This may be simulated by a wire running across stage about three feet back of footlights and six feet above the floor; on this wire attach a white sheet, tack the bottom of the sheet to the floor, about half a foot back of the footlights, and you have a fairly good imitation of a tent. In front of the tent at R. C. sets a keg with a burning candle on it and back of it a camp-stool.

Another tent may be at rear L., but this is not necessary. Footlights out, also all other lights, except one blue-shaded (with tissue paper) light that shines from behind the scenes at R.

The curtain rises on an empty stage. After a pause, JAMES, *dressed in uniform and carrying a rifle with fixed bayonet, enters from rear R. and marches across stage at rear, exits rear L. He is performing sentry duty. After a slight pause, he re-enters from rear L., marches down to tent and stands in front of tent at "attention." A noise is heard off stage at L. 1 E.*

JAMES (*levels rifle*). Halt! Who goes there?

REDD (*off stage at L. 1 E.*). Friends!

JAMES (*lowering rifle*). Advance, friends, and give the countersign!

Enter from L. 1 E. REDD, *and* TIM *from L. 1 E.* REDD *marches up to* JAMES, *salutes and whispers something in his ear.* TIM *does likewise.* JAMES *resumes sentry duty at rear of stage, marching from R. to L. at rear, going off stage each time and entering a few seconds later.*

TIM (*down R. with* REDD). James is having a hard time of it, he is. Sentry duty all night and him just married this afternoon. That's what I call tough.

REDD. Tough it is; but anyone who thinks a soldier's life in a training camp is a snap, well, they've got another think coming. Our muskets don't get much actual exercise, but our picks and shovels don't get much rest.

TIM. Look, there's a light in Major Pepper's tent. (*Points to R.*)

REDD. He's keeping late hours, ain't he? Worried about that report that there's been spies around the camp, I reckon. And then being commander of a military camp of ten thousand men ain't no soft job.

TIM. Where did you get that dope about spies being around here?

REDD. An old man and woman visited the camp yesterday and tried to take some pictures. They acted innocent enough, but you can't tell. Captain Page saw them trying to take the pictures and took the camera away from them.

TIM. Is that all he did? If it had been me, I'd put them behind the bars sure enough.

REDD. So would the Major, but he wasn't here. The Captain allowed 'em to escape, but it's caused an awful stir in camp.

TIM. I'll bet Major Pepper was up on his ear.

REDD. He was. I tell you there was something doing as soon as he struck the camp. He sent out a squad to round up every man out on leave.

TIM. Yes, that's how you got us. Tubbs had just got married and I was his best man.

REDD. Who'd he marry?

TIM. The prettiest little trained nurse you ever saw. Young lady by the name of West.

REDD. Yeah, I saw her at the house. She was a good looking little queen, wasn't she? Say, that old one kind of had her eye on you, didn't she?

TIM. She sure did. She's forty-three and desperate, and her name is Clingie Vine. Believe me, she's just as clingie as her name. If you hadn't pulled us away when you did, she'd a had me strapped to the hitchin' post in front of a minister, putting a ring on her finger and murmuring "I will" to the parson. Bunkie, that was a lucky escape.

REDD. What time is it? It must be nearly midnight.

TIM (*looks at wrist watch*). It lacks ten minutes of twelve.

REDD. We'd better sneak back. If the corporal catches us, it'll be the dog-watch tomorrow.

TIM. Twelve o'clock and we've got to get up at five. Gee, I think a lot of my old Uncle Sam to do all this for him.

REDD. It's made a man of you. (*Crosses to rear R.*) Come on. Easy now! Don't make any noise.

TIM. Gee, it's a dark night. No moon er nothin'. Good night fer spies er sump'm like that. (*Exit rear R.*)

REDD. Sh! Look out where you're going. (*Exit rear R.*)

Pause. Enter MRS. T. *from L. 1 E.*

MRS. T. There don't seem to be anyone about. It must be after midnight. Of course the boys are all asleep by this time. God bless 'em! God bless every one of 'em, every boy who wears the khaki, on land or tossing on the waves of the ocean, or over there in the trenches fightin' fer their country and their flag. Fightin' and maybe dying! God bless 'em and send 'em safe home! (*Looks around.*) This is the camp. That must have been the gate I came in. (*Looks to L.*) It's just like a big city with streets and everything and rows and rows and rows of tents. I'll have to wake one of 'em up I reckon and ask where James is. (*Crosses to tent at R.*) I kind of hate to do it, 'cause they don't get any too much sleep nohow, but I got to find James, I got to find my boy!

Enter from rear R. JAMES, *acting as sentry. He marches down C.*

JAMES (*to* MRS. T., *who has started to exit at R.*). Halt! Who goes there?

MRS. T. (*comes toward him*). Excuse me, sir; I didn't see you.

JAMES. Mother!

MRS. T. (*throws arms around him*). James! I've been huntin' fer you since eight o'clock.

JAMES. What's the matter? What's happened? What are you doing here?

MRS. T. Go over there and set down and I'll tell you.

JAMES. I can't. I'm on sentry duty.

MRS. T. Sentry duty!

JAMES. Yes, I've got to march up and down here from that tree yonder (*points to rear R.*) to the gate there. (*Points to rear L.*) I've got to keep it up until I'm relieved at two o'clock. You can't stay in here, maw. You've got to go at once. What do you want?

MRS. T. Oh, James, it's about Elsie.

JAMES (*sharply*). Elsie? What's happened to Elsie?

MRS. T. She's met with an accident, James. Tonight just after dark when she was going home (*pauses, then speaks half-crying*) a terrible accident, and on her wedding day, too—

JAMES. What was it? She ain't—(*pauses, looks at her*).

MRS. T. (*after pause*). No, son, she ain't dead. God is good. But she was run over by a motor truck just as she got off the street car.

JAMES (*aghast*). Run over by a motor truck? My little girl? I thought you promised me you'd look after her. You did. You promised me you'd look after her.

MRS. T. I know it. But she insisted on going home. She's at the Mercy Hospital. She keeps calling fer you all the time. Calling fer her husband. Mrs. Hickey said she can't last till morning.

JAMES. Calling for me? And me here five miles away

from her, here on sentry duty. I can't leave. Don't you see how it is? I can't get away.

MRS. T. Yes, you can. I borrowed some money from Mis' Hickey and I've got a carriage waitin' fer you. I couldn't get a automobile. It's over there in front of the gate. Hurry, James, hurry!

JAMES. But I can't go. I can't leave my post. I'd be a deserter. And Elsie is calling for me! And can't last until morning. Oh, what can I do? What can I do?

MRS. T. Here, ca'm down and listen to me. You go over there and take that carriage and go to your wife. This ain't no time to argue. Every minute is precious. I'm your mother. You do as I tell you!

JAMES. I can't do it. I can't leave my post. The first thing a soldier learns is to obey orders and I've got to stay here until I'm relieved.

MRS. T. Then you can't go to her. Oh, James, she's calling for you—

JAMES. Don't, mother, don't. (*Crosses to stool and sits by keg.*) I can't leave my post. The whole camp is asleep —I can't get away. And my wife is dying. My little Elsie. (*Puts head on keg and weeps.*)

MRS. T. There ain't no two ways about it, James Scotland Tubbs, you got to go!

JAMES. You'd have me desert my post? Disobey the orders of my superior officer? I can't do it. My country first!

MRS. T. No, boy, humanity first. Your wife is there injured, dying maybe. Go to her. I'll take your place.

JAMES. You?

MRS. T. You are struggling between love and duty, son. I am a woman and I know that little Elsie needs you more than anything else on earth. Then go to her. Take the carriage and go at once.

JAMES. But my duty as sentry?

MRS. T. I'll take care of that. Give me that cap and that overcoat. (*Puts them on, throwing her shawl and bonnet inside tent at R. 1 E.*) I'm only an old woman, son, but I guess I can march up and down here until two o'clock

as well as you can. Hurry up! Don't stand there looking at me. Every minute is precious. I've made up my mind, and when Mollie Tubbs makes up her mind the hull United States army and navy to boot can't unmake it. Gimme that rifle. There, I reckon I'm doing my bit for humanity and my native land!

JAMES. God bless you, mother, God bless you! (*Rushes out at L. 1 E.*)

MRS. T. He will, my boy! Make haste! (*Marches up and down from R. to L.*) My, my, I never thought I'd live to see the day when I'd be a regular marching soldier in the United States army. I reckon I'm the first woman soldier who's ever been on sentry duty in a real army camp. But it's for Elsie's sake, for James and Elsie! She needs him and Uncle Sam needs me, and here I am guarding an army camp at midnight! Mollie Tubbs, I'm proud of ye. What 'ud the neighbors in Shantytown say if they could see me now? Miss Clingie 'ud have a fit and Simon Rubbels 'ud try to have me arrested. But I'm doing my bit for my country, I reckon. Mrs. Tubbs is doing her bit. (*Marches down to L. 1 E.*)

VOICE (*off stage at L. 1 E.*). Halt, who goes there?

MRS. T. (*in gruff voice*). Private Tubbs on sentry duty! (*Turns and marches to rear R., then back to C. and down stage.*)

Enter MAJOR PEPPER *from rear R. He comes down in front of tent.*

MRS. T. (*presents bayonet at him*). Halt, who goes there?

MAJOR PEPPER. Major Pepper, in command of the camp.

MRS. T. Oh, all right. I didn't recognize you. (*Starts out rear L.*)

MAJOR. Halt!

MRS. T. Are you speaking to me?

MAJOR. Who are you?

MRS. T. Private Tubbs on sentry duty!

MAJOR. Advance five paces.

MRS. T. Huh?

MAJOR. Are you deaf or drunk? I said advance five paces.

MRS. T. I dunno how.

MAJOR (*strides to her, grasps her by the arm, pulls her to light of the candle*). A woman! What are you doing here?

MRS. T. You see it's this way, Major! Private Tubbs is my son—

MAJOR. Silence! Ho, Redd, Graham!

Enter REDD *and* TIM *after short pause from rear R. They are in shirt sleeves, but carry rifles.*

REDD (*saluting* MAJOR). Yes, sir?

MAJOR. Arrest that woman!

REDD. Woman? (*Surprised.*)

MAJOR. I caught her inside the lines, disguised in a uniform.

MRS. T. But I ain't disguised. I was only taking James' place—

MAJOR (*tensely*). Silence! Take her to the guardhouse. At once!

(REDD *and* TIM *salute and drag* MRS. T. *off at rear R.*)

MRS. T. But it's all a mistake. I was just taking my boy's place while he went to the hospital! It's all a mistake. (*She is dragged off at R.*)

MAJOR. The woman is a spy. I'll make an example of her, if it's my last act on earth!

QUICK CURTAIN.

SCENE 2: *The same as Act I. Time, the next morning at 8 o'clock. Stage is arranged in order as at the beginning of Act I.* SEREPTY *is discovered at rise of curtain seated down L. C., dressed in black, wearing traveling coat and hat suitable for an old lady. She wears black gloves and has a neat umbrella in her hand. Two neat grips are in front of her.*

SEREPTY (*looks at watch*). Eight o'clock and I've been up and dressed and ready fer my train since six. And the

train leaves at ten sharp. Mollie Tubbs must be sleepin' the sleep of the Seven Sleepers, 'cause I knocked and knocked and knocked and can't get her up no ways.

Enter SCUFFLES *from L.*

SCUFFLES (*brightly*). Good morning, Aunt Serepty.

SEREPTY. Morning, Scuffles. I'm glad you're out at last. Where's your maw and the rest of the children?

SCUFFLES. They're washing at the sink, all 'cept maw. She ain't here.

SEREPTY (*rises in alarm*). Ain't here? What do you mean? Why, it's after eight and the train leaves at ten. Where is she?

SCUFFLES. I dunno. She ain't been home all night.

SEREPTY. Why, Scuffles Tubbs, whatever's become of her?

Enter CLINGIE *from L.*

CLINGIE. Good morning.

SEREPTY. Clingie, what's become of Mollie? She ain't been here all night.

CLINGIE. Oh! (*Sinks in chair at L., almost fainting.*) She's been kidnapped, she's been stolen away. Elsie's killed and Mollie's been kidnapped and my heart's broke in twain by the perfidity of man. Oh, sorrowful day, sorrowful day! (*Leans back, closes her eyes and moans.*)

SEREPTY (*shaking her head*). Elsie killed? What do you mean?

CLINGIE. She was run over by a motor truck last night. Right on her wedding night. Ain't that awful? Run over and killed stone dead before you could say Jack Robinson. And she kep' callin' fer her husband and Mollie went after him. And now she's been killed, too. And Simon Rubbels didn't want to marry me after all. (*Leans back as before, groans.*) Oh, sorrowful day, sorrowful, sorrowful day!

SEREPTY. Clingie Vine, don't you dasst to faint. You straighten up like a livin' woman and tell me what happened. Was Elsie run over?

Enter MRS. H. *from R.*

MRS. H. What's the news?

SEREPTY. Mollie Tubbs ain't been home all night and Clingie says that Elsie was killed.

MRS. H. She wasn't killed, but she was run over and is at the Mercy Hospital. I just telephoned out there and they said James was with her and that she was resting easy.

SEREPTY. And the train leaves at ten o'clock. Where do you suppose Mollie is?

MRS. H. She went out to the training camp after James.

CLINGIE. And she's been kidnapped and held up and robbed and murdered. Oh, sorrowful day!

MRS. H. Scuffles, you go and get the children and come over to my house to breakfast.

SCUFFLES. Oh, my maw's been killed and held up and robbed and murdered. Oh! (*Cries loudly.*)

Enter QUEENIE, BILLY *and* PUNKY *from L.*

MRS. H. Here, here, don't you start takin' on. Queenie, you get your hat and wrap the children up and come with me.

QUEENIE. What for? We're going to move to the country today.

MRS. H. You're coming over to my house to breakfast.

SCUFFLES (*crying*). Oh, my maw's been murdered—

MRS. H. You hush that noise, Scuffles Tubbs. Your maw is plenty able to take care of herself. I've got sausage and buckwheat cakes and honey fer breakfast. If you don't come along you won't get none.

SCUFFLES. Sausage and buckwheat cakes? Lead me to it!

MRS. H. Come right along with me. Clingie, if you get any news about Elsie or Mollie, you run right over and tell me. Come along, you children. (*Leads children out at R.*)

SEREPTY. Well, I reckon I'd better unpack my things. If Elsie's been hurt I know Mollie and I are needed here in Shantytown a heap more'n we are at Bitter Crick. First I'll clean up the kitchen. Have you had breakfast, Clingie?

CLINGIE. Yes, Mrs. McDougal. I ain't got no appetite since I've been so cruelly deceived by the perfidiousness of Simon Rubbels.

SEREPTY. I thought he was coming to marry you.

CLINGIE. It was all a mistake. He never writ them lovin' letters at all. It was Queenie Sheba. Ain't that awful. I gave her a good spankin', I tell you.

SEREPTY. You orter give her a hundred dollars if she kept you from getting married to Simon Rubbels. (*Crosses to L.*) Well, I'm going to rid up the kitchen. (*Exits L.*)

CLINGIE. I dunno but what she's right. I never did like Simon Rubbels much nohow, him being kinder fat and with a mustache. I got a notion to run over to the drug store and call up the hospital and find out how Elsie is now.

Knock on door at R. CLINGIE *opens door and admits* MAJOR.

MAJOR (*looks sharply around*). Who lives in this house?

CLINGIE. I do. Miss Clingie Vine. Won't you set down and be seated?

MAJOR. No time for that. Are you the proprietor here?

CLINGIE. Oh, no. I'm just a lady boarder. Mrs. Tubbs lives here.

MAJOR. German woman?

CLINGIE. No, sir. I'm a United Stateser, born and bred. My paw's name was Vine and (*proudly*) my maw was a Hamm, a Virginia Hamm.

MAJOR. I was asking about Mrs. Tubbs.

CLINGIE (*disappointed*). Oh. She ain't a German, either. She's a Missouri lady and has been all her life.

MAJOR. Where is she now?

CLINGIE. Indeed and I don't know. That's what we've all been asking all the morning. You see Elsie was run over and injured by a motor car having run into her last night, just after she'd been married, too. Ain't that pathetical?

MAJOR. Who is Elsie?

CLINGIE. She's a trained nurse with a red cross on her sleeve. She married Mrs. Tubbses son James yesterday afternoon, him being a soldier out at the camp.

MAJOR. A soldier, eh? James Tubbs. Yes, yes, I remember him.

CLINGIE. And his mother is Mrs. Tubbs, who lives here,

her being a perfect lady and as good a washwoman as there is in Shantytown, if you're looking for someone to wash for you. She does both kinds, both plain and fancy, and her price is as reasonable as most, though she's gone up a little on account of the war they're having.

MAJOR. Why did she visit the training camp last night at midnight?

CLINGIE. That's what I'm trying to tell you. You see when Elsie was run over by the motor truck Mrs. Hickey come running in here—

MAJOR (*interrupting*). And who is Mrs. Hickey?

CLINGIE (*innocently*). Don't you know Ellen Hickey? Her husband is a street cleaning gentleman and she's been married three times, which maybe accounts for her dislike to Simon Rubbels and her calling him a red-headed hippopotamus, which of course he ain't, although him and me's had a misunderstanding owing to Queenie writing me loving letters and signing his name to 'em. Anyhow, Mrs. Hickey says to Mis' Tubbs, says she, "Elsie's been run over by a motor truck!" Them was her very words. I remember distinctly because I once had a cousin in Jefferson City, Missouri, who owned a pool hall, and his brother was likewise run over and injured right by his corn patch two miles out in the country.

MAJOR. Why was Mrs. Tubbs at the camp last night?

CLINGIE. To git her son, him being a soldier out there and also him being the bridegroom of Elsie, who was run over by the motor truck. And if she'd a taken my advice she'd a stayed here all night and not a went galavantin' round the outskirts of the town.

MAJOR. Who, Mrs. Tubbs?

CLINGIE. No, Elsie.

MAJOR. Then Mrs. Tubbs went to the camp last night to tell her son that his wife had been injured.

CLINGIE. Yes, sir. That's the how of it. And we ain't seen her since. And if she's alive this day she orter thank her stars. The camp is five miles outer town and she went

all alone in the dark, her being a woman who knoweth not the meaning of the word fear.

Enter SEREPTY *from L.*

MAJOR. I can't make head nor tail of what you're trying to tell me. Perhaps this lady—

SEREPTY (*coming down R. to* MAJOR). John Pepper! Well, well, well!

MAJOR. It's Serepty McDougal. (*Shakes hands warmly.*) What are you doing here in town?

SEREPTY. I'm visiting Mollie Tubbs, my niece by marriage. You remember Mollie, don't you? She used to be Mollie Walters.

MAJOR. Mollie Walters?

SEREPTY. Yes.

MAJOR. Is that who visited the training camp last night?

SEREPTY. Yes. Have you seen her?

MAJOR. In the dark only, and I didn't recognize her.

SEREPTY. Why, John Pepper, I never thought it could be too dark for you to recognize Mollie Walters. You and her used to be sweethearts twenty-five years ago.

MAJOR. Mollie Walters! Why, I had no idea she was in this part of the country. I thought she moved to Florida when she married Tubbs.

SEREPTY. She did. But they moved back to Missouri sixteen years ago. She's been a widow nearly four years now.

MAJOR. And her son is at the camp?

SEREPTY. Yes, of course he is. Just where every honest American boy should be. But whatever's happened to Mollie goodness only knows. She went out there last night to tell her boy that his wife had been injured and we haven't seen her since.

MAJOR. That explains everything. (*Goes to door at R.*) She's coming now. I told the men to bring her here.

SEREPTY. Told the men to bring her?

CLINGIE. Oh, she's been killed and they're a bringing her body here. Oh, sorrowful, sorrowful day!

Enter TIM *and* REDD *R., leading in* MRS. T., *her shawl dragging and her bonnet over one eye.*

CLINGIE. Oh, Mollie Tubbs, what you been a doing?

SEREPTY. Mollie, where have you been?

MRS. T. I've been arrested.

CLINGIE. Arrested? Oh, sorrowful day!

MRS. T. I've been a soldier on sentry duty marching up and down in front of the tents at midnight.

CLINGIE. Her sorrow's affected her brain. She ain't right.

MRS. T. And I spent the night in the guard-house.

MAJOR. But it was all a mistake, Mollie. I'm afraid I've made a mistake.

MRS. T. Mollie?

MAJOR. Don't you remember me? Don't you remember John Pepper?

MRS. T. Are you John Pepper?

MAJOR. Yes, Mollie.

MRS. T. Well, of all things! I'll bet if I'd a known last night that you were John Pepper I'd never let you put me in the guard-house.

MAJOR. And if I'd have known that you were little Mollie Walters I'm sure there would have been no occasion for it. Boys, you may go. I'll be responsible for the prisoner.

TIM *and* REDD *salute* MAJOR *and exeunt at R.*

CLINGIE. Prisoner? Oh, Mollie, what have you gone and went and done?

MRS. T. I took Jameses place last night, that's all. His wife was injured in the hospital. She needed him, so I told him to go. Have you had any news from the hospital this morning, Aunt Serepty?

SEREPTY. Mrs. Hickey says she's improving.

MRS. T. Sit down, John. Seems like we might have a real nice chat. I haven't seen you for nearly twenty years.

CLINGIE. I'll just run over to Mis' Hickey's and bring the children home. We sent 'em over there for breakfast.

SEREPTY. And I'll go with you. Mollie and John don't want no outsiders, I know.

MRS. T. Why, Aunt Serepty, we do, too.

SEREPTY. I reckon I know the old saying that two is company and four is a whole Salvation Army. Come along, Clingie. (*Exits at R.*)

CLINGIE (*giggles*). He's awful handsome, Mollie. And a soldier gentleman, too. Ain't it romantical. (*Exits R.*)

MAJOR. Can you ever forgive me for my foolish mistake last night? Of course your son shouldn't have left his post though—

MRS. T. Why not? His wife was dying—

MAJOR. But even then—

MRS. T. And I took his place. (*Seated on sofa at L., with* MAJOR.)

MAJOR. You did, indeed. You're a wonderful woman, Mollie.

MRS. T. I want you to meet James. Maybe you and he will be in the trenches together.

MAJOR. I'd like to meet him. Mrs. McDougal tells me that you've been a widow for some time, Mollie.

MRS. T. Yes, John.

MAJOR. I've never married.

MRS. T. Why not—

MAJOR. Because I never could forget a certain little, obstinate, curly-haired girl who threw me down and married Mr. Tubbs instead.

MRS. T. (*rises*). I think I'd better see what become of my children, John.

MAJOR (*drawing her back to sofa beside him*). Now, Mollie, things have gone well with me, in a certain sense, but every man's life is a failure without a woman's guiding hand and—

Enter SCUFFLES *from R.*

SCUFFLES (*runs to* MRS. T. *and hugs her*). Oh, maw, I'm so glad you come home. I thought you got lost in the shuffle. And I was awful blue 'cause I'd been such a bad boy; but I'm going to be good from now on. Honest, I am.

MRS. T. John, this is Scuffles. Scuffles, shake hands with the Major.

MAJOR (*shakes hands with him*). Do you remember when you were just about that age, Mollie?

MRS. T. Indeed I do. Now, Scuffles, go in and put on your tie. You've forgotten your necktie.

SCUFFLES. All right. I dressed in a hurry this morning. And a necktie is just a kind of a little thing, after all.

MRS. T. It's the little things in life that count, Scuffles. The little things. Why you might have a di'mond ring on your finger and a gold watch in your pocket, but if you only got one suspender button, and that busts, then where are you?

MAJOR (*laughs*). Just the same old Mollie.

SCUFFLES. I'll put on me tie. (*Exits L.*)

MRS. T. You must stay to dinner, John. I had intended to move out to the country today with Aunt Serepty, but I can't go until Elsie's out of danger.

Enter CLINGIE, *followed by* QUEENIE, BILLY *and* PUNKY, *from R.*

CLINGIE. James is over at Mis' Hickey's. And Elsie ain't going to die after all.

MRS. T. That's welcome news. Now, you'll forgive him, won't you, John? Why his being there with the little wife probably saved her life. Queenie, shake hands with Major Pepper. John, this is the rest of the family. (*They shake hands.*)

Enter JAMES, SEREPTY *and* MRS. H., *from R.*

JAMES. Mother, she's better. They give me all the hope in the world. She's going to get well. (*Sees* MAJOR.) Major! (*Salutes.*)

MRS. T. Shake hands with him, James. Major, this is my boy!

JAMES. I'm proud to meet you, sir.

MAJOR. And I'm glad to hear that your wife is not seriously injured.

MRS. T. What you did last night, son, was all right. But hereafter your country comes first. (*Takes flag from table.*) See that flag, James? (*Points to one of the stars.*) That

there little star stands for Missouri, and that's your star, 'cause you're a part of Missouri, so it's your flag and your country! Her welfare is your welfare, her fight is your fight, and her honor is your honor.

MAJOR (*at L.*). Well spoken, Mollie.

CLINGIE (*at rear with children*). Jest like a novel book. Ain't it romantical?

MRS. T. (*at C.*). I've learned a lot since my boy enlisted for the war. I've learned to love all the boys. I'm proud of Uncle Sam's soldiers. Hand to hand, foot to foot, shoulder to shoulder, they march. The rich and the poor, the high and the low, the college man and the day laborer, the millionaire and the tramp, the white and the black, with one idea in their minds, one purpose in their hearts, one voice in their ears, a voice that says (*oratorically*) "Carry on, and on and on, forward for God and home and the star-spangled banner!" I love 'em all, every soldier of Uncle Sam.

MAJOR. How about the officers, Mollie?

MRS. T. I'll tell you that when we get a little better acquainted, John.

MAJOR. I've been waiting for twenty years and over to hear you say it. I reckon I can wait a little longer.

Enter SCUFFLES *from R. wearing large red tie.*

SCUFFLES. I got it on.

CLINGIE (*grabs him and pulls him away from* MAJOR *and* MRS. *T.*). Don't you interrupt 'em. They're getting real romantical.

SCUFFLES. They ain't neither. (*Scowls.*) Maw ain't going to get that way at all. I hate getting romantical worser'n poison.

MRS. T. (*at C.*). Scuffles, quit scowlin'. And quit lookin' like a undertaker. Elsie's getting better and she's going to get well, James is a boy in a million, the sun is shining and the birds are singing. So everybody look pleasant and smile, *smile,* SMILE!

SLOW CURTAIN.

The Call of the Colors

By LINDSEY BARBEE

Price, 25 Cents

A patriotic play in 2 acts; 4 males, 10 females. Time, 1½ hours. **Scenes:** 2 interiors, easily arranged. In act one a Red Cross gauze room is shown. A true-to-life picture; the awkward worker reprimanded for going a sixteenth of an inch too far; the suspicion of spies in the room; the girls' opinion of slackers; their hero, Sergeant Hilton, back from "over there"; his mysterious little black book and the joy when Harrison dons the khaki. Tense interest, lightened by comedy. In act two the scene is transported to a French château near the firing line. A plucky girl unmasks a spy and saves a repository of ammunition from bombardment. Military enthusiasm, mysterious intrigue and a war-time love story—truly a combination symbolic of the days in which we live. A French peasant girl, an excellent part.

SYNOPSIS

Act. I.—The Red Cross gauze room has various visitors. Sergeant Hilton proves the chief topic of conversation and the strange Miss Smith is cordially welcomed. Harrison Ray is declared a slacker—and Sergeant Hilton's little black book causes much speculation. Miriam makes an announcement; Harrison offers an explanation—and the boys go marching by!

Act II.—Sergeant Hilton renews his acquaintance with Miriam and learns of the ammunition hidden in the village. The Germans arrive. The Sergeant loses his little black book—and Vilette brings news of the enemy. Miss Smith finds the book and sends a message. By means of the secret telephone, Cecile communicates with the other château—and the firing begins. Sergeant Hilton returns—in another rôle; a bugle sounds and the Stars and Stripes go floating by. The Sergeant, taken unawares, faces a revolver. Harrison Ray tells his story; the mystery is solved and the day is saved!

Lottie Sees It Through

By RAGNA B. ESKIL

Price, 15 Cents

Patriotic playlet; 3 males, 4 females. Time, 35 minutes. **Scene:** A scantily furnished living room. This timely play should induce any community to give liberally. Written for the Red Cross, but with the change of a few words it will plead for the Liberty Loan, the Y. M. C. A. fund or any other cause as worthy. Its action is based on the elemental question—can one refuse to give to his country and yet be at ease with his conscience? Still it is not a somber or dreary play—it has its light touches. It stirs the heart and its climax will arouse a fervor of patriotism only comparable to a religious revival. If unable to produce this play, get someone to read it as it cannot help but stimulate action.

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Safety First

By SHELDON PARMER

Price, 25 Cents

Farce-comedy, in 3 acts; 5 males, 5 females. Time, 2¼ hours. **Scenes:** A parlor and a garden, easily arranged. A sprightly farce full of action and with a unique plot teeming with unexpected turns and twists that will make the audience wonder "what on earth is coming next." Behind the fun and movement lurks a great moral: Always tell the truth to your wife. The cast includes three young men, a funny policeman, a terrible Turk, two young ladies, a society matron, a Turkish maiden and Mary O'Finnigan, the Irish cook. The antics of the terror-stricken husband, the policeman, the dude and the Irish cook start the audience smiling at 8:15 and send them home with aching sides from the tornado of fun at 10:40. Suitable for performance anywhere, but recommended for lodges, clubs and schools. Not a coarse or suggestive line in the play.

SYNOPSIS

Act I.—Jack's lil suburban home. A misplaced husband. "He kissed me good-bye at eighteen minutes after seven last night, and I haven't laid eyes on him since." The Irish maid is full of sympathy but she imagines a crime has been committed. Elmer, the college boy, drops in. And the terrible Turk drops out. "Sure the boss has eloped wid a Turkey!" Jerry and Jack come home after a horrible night. Explanations. "We joined the Shriners, I'm the Exalted Imported Woggle and Jack is the Bazook!" A detective on the trail. Warrants for John Doe, Richard Roe and Mary Moe. "We're on our way to Florida!"

Act II.—A month later, Jack and Jerry reported drowned at sea. The Terrible Turk looking for Zuleika. The return of the prodigals. Ghosts! Some tall explanations are in order. "I never was drowned in all my life, was I, Jerry?" "We were lashed to a mast and we floated and floated and floated!" A couple of heroes. The Terrible Turk hunting for Jack and Jerry. "A Turk never injures an insane man." Jack feigns insanity. "We are leaving this roof forever!" The end of a perfect day.

Act III.—Mrs. Bridger's garden. Elmer and Zuleika start on their honeymoon. Mabel forgives Jack, but her mamma does not. They decide to elope. Jerry's scheme works. The two McNutts. "Me middle name is George Washington, and I cannot tell a lie." The detective falls in the well. "It's his ghost!" Jack and Jerry preparing for the elopement. Mary Ann appears at the top of the ladder. A slight mistake. "It's a burglar, mum, I've got him!" The Terrible Turk finds his Zuleika. Happiness at last.

Foiled, By Heck!

By FREDERICK G. JOHNSON

Price, 25 Cents

A truly rural drama, in 1 scene and several dastardly acts; 3 males, 3 females. Time, 35 minutes. **Scene:** The mortgaged home of the homespun drama, between sunup and sundown. **Characters:** Reuben, a nearly self-made man. His wife, who did the rest. Their perfectly lovely daughter. Clarence, a rustic hero, by ginger! Olivia, the plaything of fate, poor girl. Sylvester, with a viper's heart. Curses! Curses! Already he has the papers. A screaming travesty on the old-time "b'gosh" drama.

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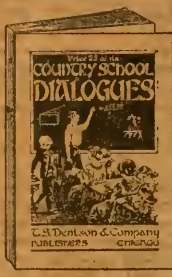

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